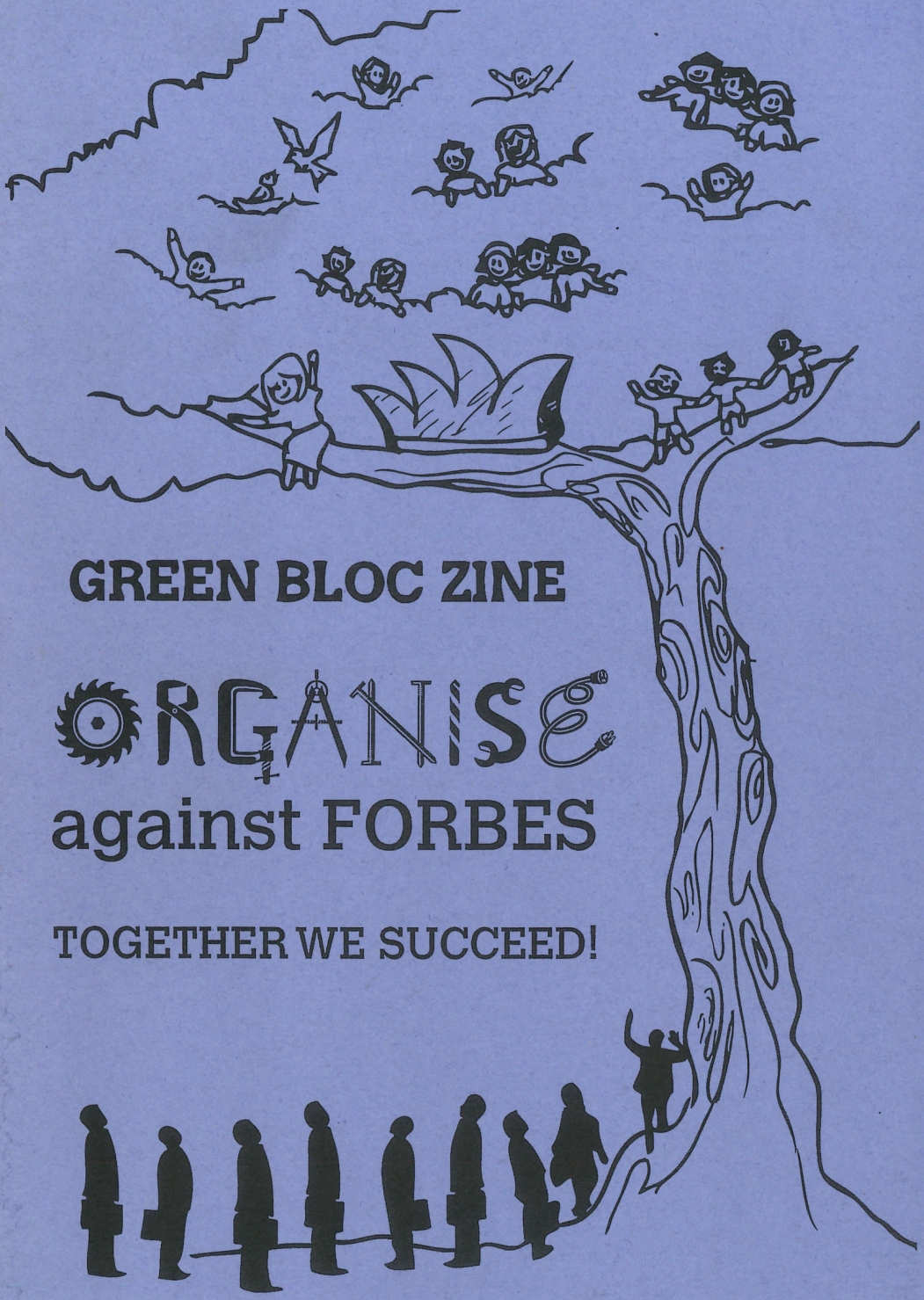

GREEN BLOC ZINE

ORGANISE against FORBES

TOGETHER WE SUCCEED!

Green Bloc and the Australian Student Environment Network recognise and pay respect to the Indigenous nations and traditional caretakers of the land. We acknowledge the land upon which Australia has been built was and always will be an integral part of the spiritual and cultural history of Indigenous peoples, and that this land was never ceded.

More than 500 Indigenous nations shared this land for over 40,000 years before invasion. We express soliarity and continued commitment to working with Indigenous peoples, both in Australia and around the world, in ongoing struggles for land rights, self determination, sovereignty and the recognition and compensation for past injustices.

The Sydney Chippendale/Newtown area is land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

If you can read this you are standing on Aboriginal land.

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Reflections on Civil Disobedience

This zine was produced and printed with the resources of the UTS Students' Association. Many many thanks for continued support of activism, ASEN and the environment movement. These resources, support and space for activism will not exist under "Voluntary" Student Unionism. Fight VSU. Student control of student affairs.

clothing

should be protective and durable, light weight (to allow for great mobility), and tight fitting while covering the entire body (to protect from tear gas, pepper spray and sun). think creatively. make your clothing a costume, make it a political statement. make it protective, wear creative shields to protect you.
protective shoes - think comfy, something you can run in.

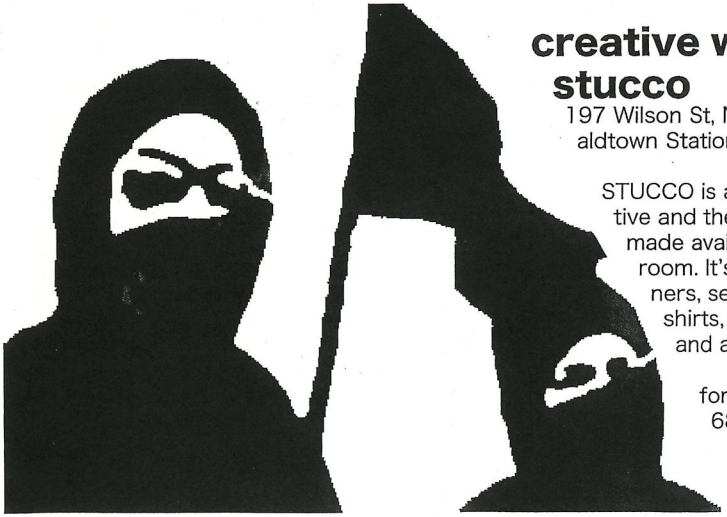
accessorise to protect yourself from sun/rain. bring a pair of sunglasses, big goofy goggles, or a gas mask to use in case of capsicum spray, and a bandana soaked in vinegar. fresh clothing in a plastic bag to be super prepared in case yours get contaminated.

what to bring

lots of water - plastic bottles with squirt top are good to drink and wash skin/eyes if necessary.
food - energy snacks for you and to share.
a little cash - including change to pay phone/food/transport
basic 1st aid stuff
whistle/noisemakers
all purpose tool - bottle/can opener, screwdriver, awl/cork screw, tweezers
pen and note paper
prescription drugs - your inhaler, insulin and any medication you require
communication equipment - bring witnessing equipment, portable radios, communication devices, etc.
menstrual pads, if needed- avoid using tampons. If you're arrested you may not have a chance to change it (tampons left in more than 6 hours increase your risk of developing toxic shock syndrome)
legal contact number 04 22 64 43 63 ☺

action fashion faux pas

don't put vaseline, mineral oil, oil-based sunscreen or moisturisers on skin as they can trap chemicals. don't wear contact lenses as they can trap irritating chemicals underneath. Don't wear dangly things that can easily be grabbed (earrings, loose hair, jewellery, etc.)
facial piercings make great targets for shift pressure points, so leave them at home.
don't go to the demo alone if you can help it. make a buddy who you keep an eye on and vice versa. try and form an affinity group with likeminded people.



creative workshop @ stucco

197 Wilson St, Newtown (close to Macdonaldtown Station & Nth King St)

STUCCO is a student housing co-operative and the residents there have kindly made available their large common room. It's a space for painting banners, sewing up flags, printing T-shirts, making cardboard puppets and anything else.

for info: Graham 0407 951 688 or Kris 0431 370 148.

green bloc

Forbes Global CEO Conference, Global Capitalism and the Neoliberal Agenda

What is Forbes 500? (isn't it some kind of car race?)

On August 30, the fifth annual Forbes 500 Global CEO Conference comes to Australia, to the Sydney Opera House. Like the World Trade Organisation and the World Economic Forum, the Global CEO Conference is a means of promoting economic and social policies that benefit the rich and powerful at the expense of the majority of the world's people and the environment.

John Howard will take a day out of his busy schedule attacking students and workers' rights to open the conference where "senior figures from the world's leading companies will discuss the best ways to nurture and capitalise on innovation and reveal the latest global trends." A $5000- a head event restricted to top executives means that you're not invited. But you can come anyway by joining the protests at the Sydney Opera House and surrounds.

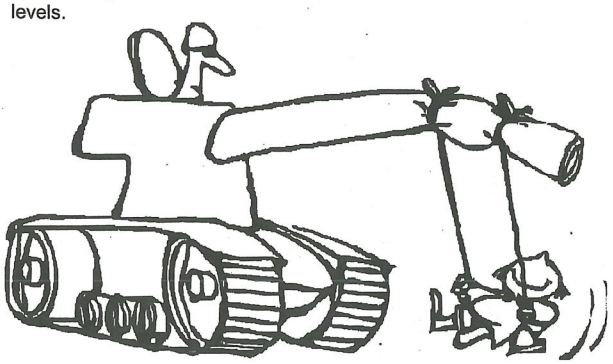
But... maybe theyre debating solutions to global environment problems? Surely we need business on our side?

Sometimes there's a perception among environmentalists that business is part of the solution to the global environmental crisis, and that we should try to 'work within the system' with corporations, to acheive change.

But think about the reality of the situation. All major environmental problems are caused by corporate greed and an economic system that allows profit margins to come before all other considerations. Most businesses exist because they have exploited the environment and workers to make profit.

Our economic system is premised on a concept of infinite growth and expansion - yet we live in a finite ecosystem reaching the limits of its natural boundaries. Some businesses have changed their PR spin in recent years, selling themselves as 'environmentally friendly'. For example, Shell promotes its solar energy programs while still spending x more on oil and gas exploration. Toyota is famous for its 'plant a tree day' whilst continuing to make x million a year from selling cars, a major cause of climate change.

Here, in the rich world it is easy for us to forget the worst excesses of corporations. But in the majority world - countries in India, Asia, South America and Africa - our corporations exploit and pillage the environment and destroy age-old social systems in the relentless pursuit of profit away from the scutiny of mass media. And the irony is, the riches being made aren't even being shared. World inequality indicators show that inequality has worsened to record levels.



Whilst every individual working for a large corporation obviously isn't an evil person, they are constrained by a structure and economic system that doesn't allow non-economic factors (like the environment) to influence primary behaviour. Until we acheive systemic change, the machine of global corporate capitalism will keep on its destructive path until there is nothing left...

So, what's going on with the world?

While the profits of giant corporations soar, inequality grows. We are faced with a global environmental crisis and a crisis of global poverty of epic proportions. The war in Iraq and the war on terrorism are only the extreme end of a globalised violence. In fact the Iraq occupation is a radical Neoliberal experiment that mirrors the policies of economic rationalism and structural adjustment programs across the majority world. Many of the corporations seeking profits in Iraq will attend the Forbes Conference.

Common ownership and common property rights are being undermined and public services are increasingly being privatised. How can they serve the public good if their primary aim becomes to make private profit? Workers rights are being removed, and migrants are being criminalised on the back of a State-encouraged rise in racism and nationalism. The suspension of civil rights and permanent war is being normalised. Women's rights are being rolled back, with the State thinking it's ok to interfere with our reproductive freedoms. Climate change and the energy crisis is not being addressed. Free trade deals allow giant corporations even more freedom whilst impoverishing the majority of people in the world.

Stop! You're depressing me! Isn't there any good news? What's the alternative anyway? And how will protesting help?

In every country, mostly in the Majority world but even here in Australia, there are collectives, groups and networks resisting the current state of corporate globalisation and already working on their own alternatives for a better, fairer world.

There is no one answer to the question 'what's the alternative' - because there are millions of alternatives, as many possible futures as you can stretch your imagination to see!

However, a taste of some alternative futures already being built and fought for includes the autonomous factories and communities in Argentina, the Zapatistas in Mexico, the anti-dam movements in India and Thailand, and Indigenous struggle for land and justice in Australia.

These alternatives have in common a very different conception of community, where people come together, support each other, and direct their energy and passion to the betterment of the community rather than individual profit-making. This requires, of course, radical changes to our economy and social structure. There's a lot to think about – but thankfully, a lot of people thinking about it already.

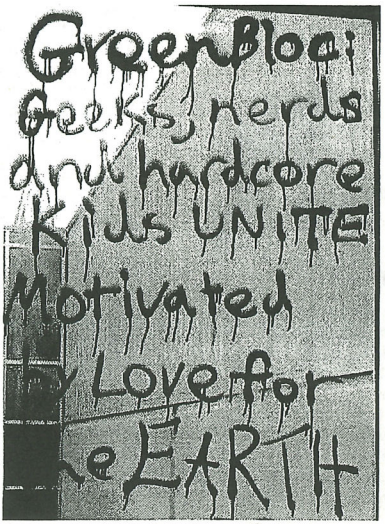
The Forbes 500 counter-convergence protests will be an expression of both our resistance to Neoliberalism, Corporate Capitalism and War as well as our passion and support for global justice. It is a show of solidarity with those fighting oppression all over the world, and an attempt to stop a meeting of the world's biggest Corporate Criminals.

So, how do I get involved in Green Bloc?

We'd love you to be part of the Australian Student Environment Network (ASEN) 'Green Bloc' at the Forbes protests! We will be joining with other like-minded people in Sydney the weekend before for the 'Subplot' conference and the 'Sydney Social Forum' to discuss ideas about the current state of the world and possible alternatives, and to plan our tactics for the actual protests.

To get involved, contact:

Anna 0410 375 755, or Holly 0417 682 541

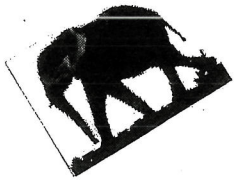


raNdoM graffiti from monash uni bar occupation

affinity groups

What is an affinity group?

An affinity group is a group of people who have an affinity for each other, know each others strengths and weaknesses, support each other, and do (or intend to do) political/campaign work together. Most of us will have had some childhood/formative experience of being part of a group whether informally, as in a group of kids that are the same age and live in the same street, suburb or town, or formally, as in being involved in a sports team. However, affinity groups differ from these for numerous reasons, as explained below, (hierarchy, trust, responsibility to each other etc).



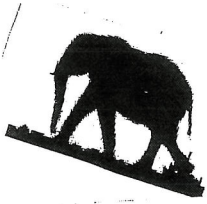
The concept of 'affinity groups has a long history. They developed as an organising structure during the Spanish Civil war and have been used with amazing success over the last thirty years of feminist, anti-nuclear, environmental and social justice movements around the world. They were first used as a structure for a large scale non-violent blockade during the 30,000 strong occupation of the Ruhr nuclear power station in Germany in 1969, and then in the United States occupations / blockades of the Seabrook nuclear power station in '71 when 10,000 were arrested and again many times in the highly successful US anti-nuclear movement during the '70's and '80's. Their use in sustaining activists through high levels of police repression has been borne out time and again. More recently, they have been used constructively in the mass protest actions in Seattle and Washington.

We don't have to use the word 'affinity group' - blockade teams, action groups, cells, action collectives etc. have all been used to describe the same concept. It would be best to find the most relevant name depending on when and where the structure is used. Also, each affinity group can choose their own name.

Organisation

Within an affinity group, there are a whole range of different roles that it's members can perform. A lot of these roles will be determined by the aim or raison detre of the AG, but could include a Media Spokesperson, to either talk to / deal with news media, a Quick decision facilitator, 1st Aid to take care of people that are hurt, a Spokesperson to convey the affinity group's ideas and decisions to other AG's, a Legal Observer, and Arrest support.

As well as these roles within itself the AG can take on a specialised role in the way it interacts with other AGs, or operates within the breadth of the protest or campaign. There can be affinity groups specialising in cop-watching, countering "protest high-jackers", legal observation, catering, communication & cluster liaison, medical., clowning, or good old common garden variety blockading. With this role focus, each AG can do it's job and support the work of other affinity groups. In this way, many affinity groups form an interdependent network that achieves so much more than a large group of individual activists.



Within the context of a demonstration, as important as the aspect of the AG that is out on the street, is the support crew. They do all the mundane stuff, and regrettably don't get the recognition that they deserve. They can walk/feed pets, water plants, childcare, call employers and freaked out parents/children, pay rent etc. As a consequence, more people can participate (and risk more) because they have help with these things. The emotional support is not to be underestimated; apart from the offers of hugs, kisses, and phone calls, people feel safe enough to risk themselves when they know that they have emotional support. Support crew can also indirectly support direct action by supplying information to news media and interested community groups, raising funds and providing logistical support, like food, water and accommodation. The street aspect of an AG, and its support crew can (and should) swap round, so that there is a clear understanding within it as to the importance of all roles in the group's effectiveness.

With whom do I form an affinity group?

The simple answer to this is the people that you know, and that feel the same way about the issue(s) in question. They could be people you see in a tutorial, work with, go out with, or live with. The point to stress however, is that you have something in common other than the issue that is bringing you all together, and that you trust them and they trust you.

An important aspect to being part of an affinity group is to get to know where each other is at regarding the campaign or issue. This can involve having a meal together, and you all discussing it after you have eaten, or doing some form of activist related training together, like attending a non-violence, conflict resolution or facilitation workshop, developing de-arresting strategies if needed, working out how to deal with certain police tactics ie. snatch squads, police horses.

You should all have a shared idea of what you want individually & collectively from the action/campaign, how it will conceivably go, what support you will need from others, and what you can offer others. It helps if you have agreement on certain basic things: how active, how spiritual, how non-violent, how touchy-feely, how spiky, how willing to risk arrest, when you'll bail-out, your overall political perspective etc. But then again, you may all just work together

Grassroots Strategic Planning

By Andrew Pearson, worldrangers@hotmail.com c/o
Internationalist Books and Community Center, 405 W Franklin St, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 27516, USA

Strategic planning is about digging in for the long haul, and creating a new society in the process. We've all undoubtable run into problems when we organise – unproductive meetings, spinning our wheels, always the same people planning, events that never seem to reach the mainstream, feeling isolated, etc... But we've also probably also seen the amazing results of people's collective decision making to engage in social change efforts. Creating a strategy is undoubtably one of the most valuable processes we have in our toolbox. So if you've never been through a strategic planning process before, then its time to expand your horizons! And if you think you already know it all, its time to question those assumptions! Some questions for us to consider along the way include:

1. What is strategy?
2. How is it used? By whom?
3. What problems have you faced in your organizing efforts, movement participation, events, meetings?
4. How have people experienced planning processes? Flaws and benefits?
5. Are there flaws with strategic planning?
   - Presupposes that we can plan everything
   - Can deny spontaneity, but also can establish the best conditions within which we can be creative
   - No strategy can ever substitute for mass, collective action, but rarely does such action arise without a strategic movement before.
1. What is grassroots strategic planning?

Sources for this writing include:

Resources for Organizing and Social Change
PO Box 776, Monroe ME, 04951, USA
(207) 525-7776, invert@acadia.net
http://www.abilitymaine.org/rosc/cog.html

Student Environmental Action Coalition
PO BOX 31909, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA
(215) 222-4711, seac@seac.org
http://www.seac.org/sog/

Analysis

We must always base our inspiration to take action on the realities of the world around us. Often, the problems we see in stark reality are symptoms of even greater problems. When we develop our analysis of the problems around us, we should consider multiple aspects of human society and the natural world, such as:

- Laws, government institutions, military culture, family structures, health care, transportation, resource extraction, childhood development, energy consumption, crafts, entertainment, sexuality, gender roles, religion, self-worth, race, class, property, education, work, community, leisure, death, ecological knowledge, habitation, food production, animal welfare, etc...

Research. When doing so, dig deeper and unravel the complexities of a problem, all the possible solutions.

Links. Develop understanding of interconnections between forms of oppression, systems of control...

History. Learn the historical background behind aspects of our world. Read history from the point of view of both "victors" and the oppressed, people and nature.

Vision

Perhaps the most compelling reason that people get active and mobilise around issues of social and environmental justice is the vision that they develop of a better world. A vision to which we are committed will come from both selfish and selfless reasons. The process of visioning is essential to creating movements that will be able to challenge systems of oppression over the long haul.

- Visualise the society you wish to live in
- Understand how your social upbringing shapes what you think is possible

Values

What are your core values? What moral or ethical truths do you govern your actions by?

Campaigns

A good campaign isn't just a series of unconnected events and rallies. It must be based on a coherent idea of what is going to be achieved and how to achieve it. For a campaign to succeed there must be set goals, an examination of its impact upon your organization, constituents and allies, knowledge of the opponents, targets, tactics and timelines

Clarify your goals and brainstorm strategies to create a campaign; discuss it, revise it, and evaluate it after it's done.

A campaign is a series of activities, or strategies, used to reach a group's goals. Campaigns are more likely to be successful if your entire group has an opportunity to be involved in the planning process. It is crucial that strategies and the means to accomplish them are consistent with your group's mission. Sometimes your first goal will be to simply bring the issue and the organization to the public eye, before any other campaigning can be effective. Other times a group forms around an issue that is already "hot" and the best strategy is to get to work immediately on ways to achieve a certain outcome. Clarifying the outcomes desired, the means to accomplish them, and the funds needed, are the first steps in developing a campaign.

You may wish to set aside a few hours to plan at a time other than your regular meeting. Using large newsprint and some markers, conduct a brainstorming session to identify your goals. Then come up with a list of strategies and tactics for achieving those goals. After you narrow down the list to a few goals, make a timeline. Include events beyond your control (holidays, election day, etc.), other actions and events you have planned, and all preparations and deadlines leading up to them. Adjust your timeline to make it realistic.

Pretend you are the opposition and hold a strategy session from their perspective. How would you effectively work against your own campaign? Identify weaknesses and adjust your own strategy accordingly. After the campaign, look back at your goals, tactics, and timeline and do a thorough group evaluation. Save this evaluation and review it when you plan a new campaign. Thinking and planning strategically can make the difference between ho-hum campaigns that get no attention, and dynamic, creative campaigns that excite people, build your organization, and create real change

Long Range Planning

Use a long-range plan to more effectively reach goals that will take a while to reach.

It's rare for a group to have only short-term goals that are achieved quickly. Usually a group's mission is broad, with several or many goals, and it needs some time to reach them. In such cases, a long-range plan can help to gradually build support for what you want. Ask an established group for a copy of its long-range plan to see how one is written. See the Resources section for a guide to long range planning.

1. Decide on or confirm the group's mission
2. Agree on what the group has done and is doing now
3. Identify medium and long term goals for the future (next year, 3 years, 5 years, longer)
4. Decide on strategies and tactics (specific tools such as petitioning or lobbying) to achieve those goals
5. Make sure the plan is carried out.

It is best to hold a one-day (or longer) meeting or set aside time at several regular group meetings to create a long-range plan, using a process like the 5 steps listed above. Break down the plan into goals (Goal 1, Goal 2...) or by the work each committee or sub-group of your organization will be doing. Often the goals and committee projects will go together.

Follow-up (step 5) is crucial. The group can have a nicely written plan, but it is a recipe for failure if there is no one to oversee whether it is being followed or the goals being reached. Choose a person or committee to watch over the plan and set-aside time at regular group meetings to measure actual success against your goals. Sometimes you may feel your group is spinning its wheels, but when you look back at the long-range plan you may find a lot more success than you thought.

There are different methods of organizing or ways of making social change, and all have their uses.

METHOD **EXAMPLES**
Direct Service Affordable housing development. Insulating or weatherizing homes. Shelter. Soup Kitchen.
Education Issue research. Teach people how to look for an apartment.Cultural events.
Self-Help Neighborhood clean-up day.Baby sitting co-op.
Advocacy Propose laws or regulations on behalf of people who don't necessarily know that it is being done.
Direct Action The people who have the problem take action to solve it. Make the city clean
up the street or provide child care.

Direct Action Organizing is based on the power of the people to take collective action on their own behalf. The point is not that one approach is better than the others. Often many kinds of organizing are needed, but grassroots activism is based on the premise that people make change from the ground up, and thus grassroots strategic planning focuses on a direct action model of organizing.

Principles Of Direct Action

1. Win concrete improvements in people's lives.
2. Make people aware of their own power (by winning victories).
3. Alter the relations of power between people, the government, and other institutions by building strong permanent local, state and national organizations.

We all have ideas about how society could be better in the future, but when we say "win improvements", we mean today, here and now concrete improvements, like wining smaller class size in school, forcing the city to build affordable housing, or requiring utilities to produce energy from such renewable sources as wind and sun.

When we say that we want to give people "a sense of their own power", we mean that people themselves are involved in winning the issue. If an advocate goes out and speaks for you, or if a lawyer sues for you, you get a sense of the power of the advocate or the lawyer, but not of your own power. Direct Action Organizing brings people directly into the situation in large numbers so that they know that they won. Why does it matter? Because people who develop a sense of their organized power are more likely to stay active and take on larger issues.

When we say that we want to "alter the relations of power", we mean building organizations that those in power, at all levels of government, will always have to worry about. Whenever they decide to do anything that has an impact on your group, they are going to have to say "wait a minute", how will that organization react to this? We also know from sad experience that what is won this year can be taken away next year if the organization that won it disappears or is weakened. In Direct Action Organizing, building an organization is always as important as winning a particular issue. In the long haul, our strategies can make possible entirely different social systems, where decision making power itself is vested in communities and the alternative institutions that we create as part of our campaigning.

Other Organizing Principles
- Form follows function
- Campaigns must build our capacity to organize
- There will be no critique of revolution by any individual or group that can ever offer all the answers. Revolutions are organic processes, the result of mass, participatory, autonomous action.
- The means determine the ends
- We can never "represent" another community.
- No change effort can ever successfully take place entirely within or outside the existing social order.
- We can never have everyone affected by an issue around the same table. So we need processes that are directly accountable to those affected.

THE SIX STEPS OF DIRECT ACTION ORGANIZING

When we engage in Direct Action Organizing, we organize a campaign to win a specific issue, that is, a specific solution to a problem. An issue campaign usually goes through this series of stages.

A. People identify a problem.
The people who have the problem agree on a solution and how to get it. They may define the issue narrowly: "Make our landlord return our rent deposits when we move out." Or, they may define it more broadly: "Make the city council pass a law requiring the return of rent deposits." If the landlord owns only the one building, the tenants may be able to win on their own, but if the landlord owns many buildings around the city, then building a coalition to pass a law might be the best way.

B. The organization turns the problem into an issue.
There is a difference between a problem and an issue. An issue is a specific solution to a problem that you choose to work on. You don't always get to choose your problems. Often your problems choose you. But you always choose your issues, the solution to the problem that you wish to win. Air pollution is a problem. Changing the law to get older power plants covered by the same air quality regulations that apply to newer plants is an issue.

Criteria for Choosing an Issue
A problem is an identified imbalance in power, system of oppression, destructive policy.... An issue is the solution to that problem. Will your issue:
- Result in real improvements in people's lives
- Give people a sense of their own power
- Alter the relations of power
- Be worthwhile
- Be winnable
- Be widely felt
- Be deeply felt
- Be easy to understand

- Have a clear target
- Have a clear time frame that works for you
- Be non-divisive (to your constituency)
- Build leadership
- Set your organization up for the next campaign
- Be able to raise money
- Be consistent with your values and vision

C. Develop strategy.
A strategy is the overall plan for a campaign. It is about power relationships and it involves asking six questions:

1. What are your long and short-term goals?
2. What are your organizational strengths and weaknesses.
3. Who cares about this problem?
4. Who are your allies?
5. Who has the power to give you what we want?
6. What tactics can you use to apply your power and make it felt by those who can give you what you want.

D. Bring Many People To Face The Decision-maker.
Use large meetings and actions to force the person who can give you what you want to react. That person is the decision-maker. The decision-maker is often referred to as the "target" of the campaign. The decision-maker is always an individual person or number of individuals, never a board or elected body as a whole. Decision making bodies must be personalised. So, if you are trying to get something passed by the City Council, for example, you don't say the decision-maker is the City Council. Rather you need specific members of the council to vote on our issue. Who are they? Name them. What is your power over them. Do you have members in their districts?

E. The Decision-maker reacts to you.
You either gets what you want or you have to go out and organize still larger numbers of people for a second round of the fight. Sometimes it takes several rounds before the fight is won. That is why we think of organizing as a whole campaign, not just as a series of one shot events.

F. Win, regroup, go on to next campaign.

The Strategy Chart

Goals

Long term (societal)
- To create the policy, process, structural and systemic conditions that will satisfy human need and ecological integrity

Medium term (campaign)
- A specific campaign objective that satisfies the criteria for issue-based organizing
- Must be articulated as a demand, a clear solution to a problem

Short term (capacity)
- Specific steps, actions, or events that bring you closer to your campaign objective
- Can see when they've been completed

Example:
- *Long range: Reduce our oil dependency.*
- *Medium range: Shift the school to alternative energy.*
- *Short range: Start a solar-power co-op house by the end of this year.*

Organizational considerations

What do you have? List the resources that your organization brings to the campaign. Include: money, number of staff, facilities, reputation, membership, communication, skills.
- What is the budget, including in-kind contributions?

What do you need? List the specific ways in which you want your organization to be strengthened by the campaign:
- Expand organizers
- Increase experience
- Build membership base
- Expand into new constituencies
- Raise more money

Assess your group: List internal strengths and weaknesses of your group, and outline solutions to any problems.
- Who are you individually?
- Who are you as a group?
- Consider issues of race, class, gender, sex, ability, and age. Develop processes such as caucuses for women, queers, or people of colour to autonomously organize, and safe spaces for members of majority groups to explore their role in challenging oppression.

Structure
- How will you make decisions?
- How will you evaluate your progress?

Constituents

Who cares enough about this issue to join in or help the organisation?
- Whose problem is it?
- What do they gain is they win?
- What risks are they taking?
- What power do they have over the target?
- What groups are they organised into?

Develop a database. Your organizing is only as effective as whom you are able to mobilise.

Recruitment strategies can be tailored to constituencies. Remember to: legitimate yourself, present a clear and compelling reason to get involved, give specific ways that someone can help.

Personal relationships and one-on-one contact are the most effective forms of mobilising people

Allies

Allies are groups or individuals that may not work directly on a campaign, but can be called on for specific types of support. Examples include donors, coalition partners, sponsors, and endorsers.
- Who might support the efforts of your constituency?
- What resources, power, or skills could they donate?
- What constraints may each ally have on their support

Networking and Outreach are key tactical categories to develop allies.

Coalition building is a process which may involve constituents, allies, or both, and requires the creation of a decision making process which may be different than that of any individual group (ie votes weighted based on participation levels, only one vote per official organizational member, quorums for certain constituencies before decisions can be made).

Opponents

Opponents are individuals or institutions with the power to stop you from achieving your goals.
- Who will actively oppose you?
- What resources, tools, and tactics do they have at their disposal?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Repression: Throughout history, people in power have used a wide array of repressive tactics to stifle dissent, prevent social change, and exert and extend their domination over others. Organizations and social movements must assess the threats that they face from opponents, and create policies, cultures and structures that can

stand up to repression. Types of repression include:

- Intimidation, infiltration, negative publicity, censoring, extradition, assassination, jailing, fines, imprisonment, assault, cooptation,

Movement Security: Ways that people can protect themselves form repression and create cultures of resistance include:

- Good facilitation techniques, affinity group organizing, decentralised decision making, dispersal of knowledge, skill sharing, strike funds, bail funds, self-defence and nonviolence training, gaining broad public support, befriending individuals in power positions, keeping some things secret, involving kids and adults, etc...

Targets

A target is always a person, It is never an institution or elected body.

Primary

- Who has the power to give you what you want?
- What power do you have over them?

Secondary

- Who has power over the primary target?
- Who do you have access to that can influence the primary decision-maker?

Power

Power is not only what you have but also what the enemy thinks you have.
Power concedes nothing without a demand
Our nettlesome task is to discover how to organize our strength into compelling power.
Now a lot of us... often have problems with power. There is nothing wrong with power if used correctly.... What we need to realise is that power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anaemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.
–Martin Luther King Jnr

Before you can develop a good campaign, you must understand power. We often think it must be bad, since the bad people have it and use it to oppress others. But power is "value-neutral": it's good if we have it and bad if we don't. Organizing is about creating nonhierarchical power structures; giving all power to the people.

Power analysis: In order to win a campaign, you must know what forms of power you have access to. A power analysis is a process of gauging your strengths and those of your targets. The primary forms of power to consider are:

- Economic: Money
- Cultural: Status
- Political: Vote
- Social: People

Tactics

For each target, list the tactics that each constituent group can best use to make its power felt.

- Who are we trying to influence with this tactic? How will it influence them?
- What kind of power are we bringing into this situation? How are we applying it?
- How are we following through? How does this tactic build our power for the next step?

Tactics must be:

- In context
- Flexible and creative
- Make sense to the membership
- Directed at a specific target
- Be backed up by a form of power

Tactics can be categorised as:

- Fundraising
- Facilitation
- Publicity, Media
- Education
- Direct action
- Support structures
- Celebration
- Electoral
- Legal
- Follow through
- Documentation
- Recruitment

Tactics include:

- Media events
- Actions for information and demands
- Public hearings
- Strikes and occupations
- Law suits
- Door to door canvassing
- Petitioning
- Elections
- Negotiations
- Rallies
- Civil disobedience

Checklist for Planning an Action

1. Will your action be fun and based on real power
2. Is everyone in your group happy with the plan? Is it in their experience?
3. Are your demands clear and simple?
4. Do you have an appointment?
5. Have you scouted the building/area and made a floorplan? Can you find the elevator/stairs, bathrooms, payphone, parking, target's office...
6. Can the site accommodate members with disabilities?
7. Has the group selected spokespeople?
8. Are people prepared for their roles?
9. Have you had a dress rehearsal?
10. What symbols will you take with you?
11. What is the turnout plan for the action?
12. Media – have they been notified?
13. Is someone selected to take notes/write a report about the action?
14. Have you organized a debriefing?

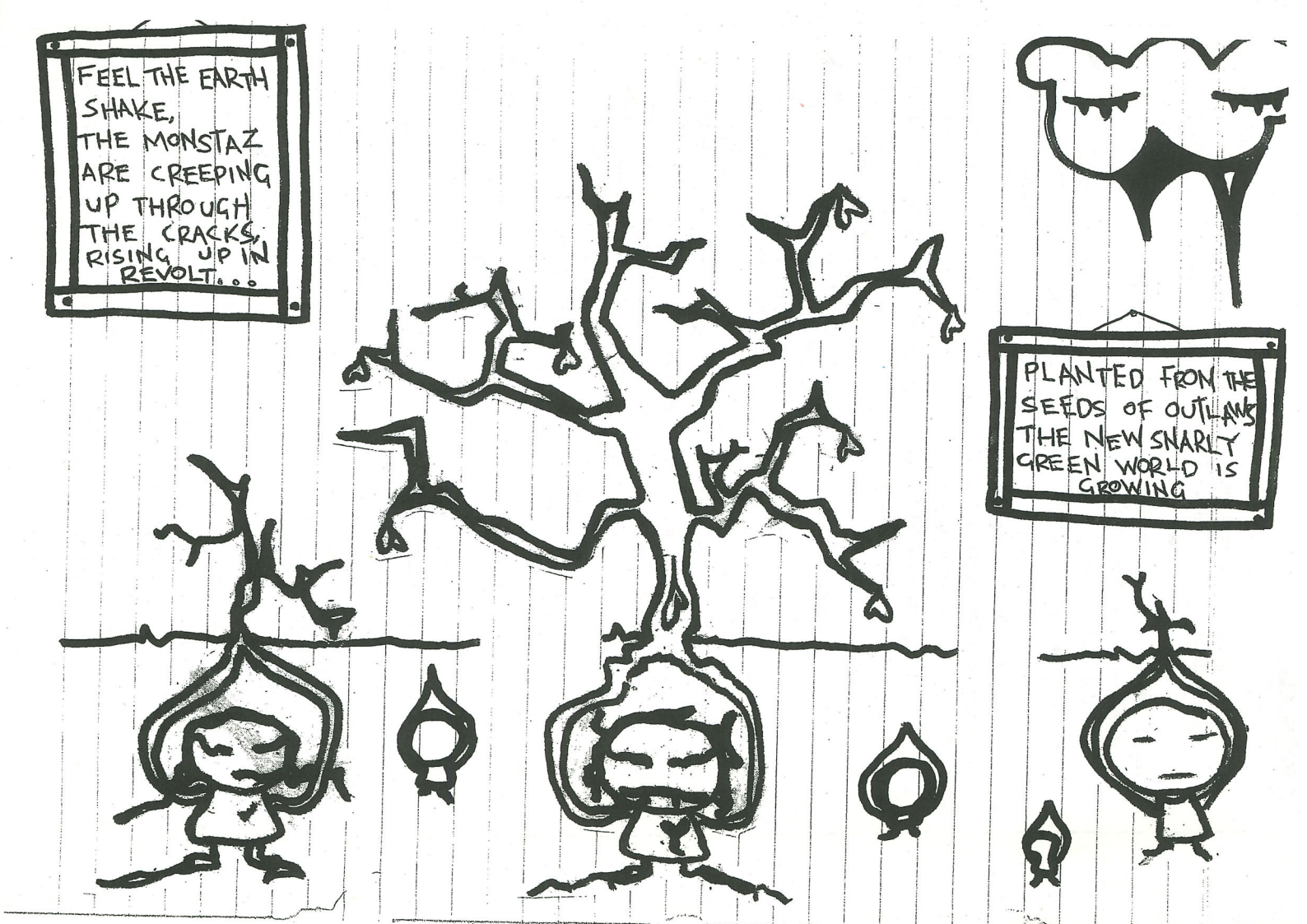
Timelines

Each tactic will have a set of tasks that need to be identified and divvyed up by the group. Tasks often have an order that makes sense, and need specific decisions or pieces of information to be complete.

- All tasks and tactics should be put on a timeline
- Assign clear responsibility for each task/tactic, and know who needs to be involved in what decisions along the way.
- A 2-D timeline places categories of tactics on one axis and dates on the other. It is useful to show the interconnections between elements of a campaign and to arrange things so they build on one another.

A timeline should consider three aspects of organizing: External, internal and issue based dates.

- External calendar considers dates of public holidays, meetings of officials, festivals, school dates, and cycles that affect your constituency, allies or opponents.
- Internal calendar includes dates for consistent group events, like elections, budgeting processes, strategy sessions, general meetings, and teach-ins.
- Campaign timeline includes tasks which may be one-time-only or ongoing, but are specifically related to a campaign and directed at a target.


FEEL THE EARTH SHAKE, THE MONSTAZ ARE CREEPING UP THROUGH THE CRACKS, RISING UP IN REVOLT...
PLANTED FROM THE SEEDS OF OUTLAWS THE NEW SNARLY GREEN WORLD IS GROWING

100 ideas for actions

Protest actions (symbolic actions)

1. Refusal of assembly to disperse
2. Sit-down
3. Bodily interjection (e.g. protestors placing themselves between whalers and their prey)
4. Bodily obstruction (e.g. protestors chained to, or lying in front of, bulldozers)
5. Trespass into closed areas (e.g. a military base)
6. Airborne 'invasion' (flying protest balloons or airships over target)
7. Occupations
8. Inviting arrest/imprisonment
9. Sit-in (attendance at private or restricted facilities, e.g. a park or club)
10. Stand-in (joining queues at targeted shops or services to dissuade other custom)
11. Ride-in (use of restricted or segregated transport, e.g. on trains, buses)
12. Pray-in (attendance at services of religious institutions opposed to change)
13. Return of waste products (returning dumped waste to the dumper or manufacturer)
14. Heckling
15. Guerilla theatre (theatre that involves the bystander or even the target: Jerry Rubin threw dollar bills onto the dealing floor of the New York Stock Exchange to show how the stockbrokers scrabbled like animals to get hold of the money)
16. Public burning of papers (e.g. poll tax bills), flags, etc.
17. Protest strip
18. Graffiti
19. Defacing signs or advertisements
20. Adoption of new signs or names (e.g. renaming a street or institution in defiance of authority)
21. Refusal to collaborate with government bodies
22. Declining government awards or appointments
23. Boycott of elections
24. Hunger strike
25. Penitential (satyagrahic) fast

Social actions

26. Ghosting (persistent following of individuals)
27. Personal harassment (e.g. taunting, picketing home)
28. Publicising individual's activities
29. Social boycott (e.g. refusal to converse or trade with particular individuals)
30. Ostracism (radical form of social boycott)
31. Denial of sexual relations (classically, a women's protest against their war-mongering males)
32. Excommunication
33. Boycott of meetings, events or lectures
34. Group silence (e.g. refusal of audience to question or applaud)
35. Walk-out
36. Picketing
37. Breaking social taboos
38. Socialising with outcasts
39. Harbouring fugitives
40. Sanctuary (use of sacred building to harbour individuals, e.g. those threatened with deportation)

Boycotts and strikes

41. Consumers' boycott of goods
42. Consumers' boycott of producer
43. Withholding of rent
44. Refusal to pay tax
45. Refusal to pay debts or charges
46. Withdrawal of bank deposits
47. Retailers' boycott
48. Blacking of goods by suppliers
49. Blacking of raw materials by workers
50. Demonstration strike (short strike to demonstrate power and build solidarity)
51. Go-slow
52. Work-to-rule (a form of go-slow in which all rules and regulations in the workplace are meticulously observed)

53. Coordinated reporting sick
54. Overtime strike
55. Selective strike (withdrawal of labour on selected activities)
56. Detailed strike (strike joined by individual workers or units one-by-one)
57. Bumper strike (striking firms in an industry one-by-one to expose them to competition by rivals)
58. Wildcat or lightning strikes
59. Lock-up or stay-in strike
60. Reverse strike (e.g. carrying out public works unpaid in order to draw attention to need)
61. Personal strike (individual refusal to obey orders, e.g. by a prisoner)
62. *Hartal* (cessation of economic activity for limited periods in protest by entire community)
63. General strike (strike by workers across industry; main tenet of revolutionary syndicalism)

Non-cooperation and obstruction: actions by outsiders

64. Overloading facilities or services
65. Overloading administrative systems
66. Slow or cumbersome compliance with regulations
67. Stalling by customers (e.g. by drawing out or complicating routine transactions)
68. Breaking bad laws on principle (e.g. non-payment of poll tax)
69. Covert breaking of bad laws (e.g. non-registration for poll tax)
70. Publishing secret material
71. Disclosing secret identities (e.g. of security agents)
72. Tracking (e.g. following military or nuclear deployments)
73. Forgery of letters, etc.
74. Breaking official boycotts/blockades
75. Refusal to recognise appointed officials
76. Non-cooperation with police, bailiffs, etc.
77. Removal of street signs, door numbers, etc. occupation to fool security forces)
78. Closure of roads
79. Infiltration of institutions with spies or saboteurs
80. Electronic picketing
81. Spoiling or contamination of goods (e.g. with ink or other dye)
82. Monkey-wrenching (see main text)
83. Liberating animals in traps or laboratories

Non-cooperation and obstruction: actions by insiders

84. Refusal to perform selected actions (e.g. officials refusing to proceed against poll tax defaulters; cf. selective strikes)
85. Failure to pass on information/instructions
86. Deliberate inefficiency
87. Industrial sabotage (sabotage of plant by workers)
88. Non-cooperation by juries (e.g. refusal to find guilty)
89. Non-cooperation or mutiny by security forces
90. Non-cooperation by government units (e.g. local authorities in budget setting)

Positive direct action

91. Non-retaliation
92. Entryism
93. Alternative radio/newspapers
94. Alternative schools/colleges
95. Selective patronage (positive buying/investment)
96. Alternative economic bodies (e.g. co-operatives, non-profits, 'green' companies)
97. Alternative economies (e.g. local exchange trading schemes, black markets)
98. Suspending specified regulations within community (e.g. property rights in commune)
99. Selective refusal of entry to area (e.g. nuclear-free zones)
100. Alternative community with independent sovereign government

Sources: Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*

SPRUIKING FOR THE NEOCONS...

US neo-con spruikers to descend on Sydney

In late August the Sydney Opera House hosts a crew of corporate spuikers. The neo-conservative lobby machine - Forbes Global - is coming to town. We will be treated to the edifying spectacle of an iconic public building given over to corporate conferencing. Steve Forbes, the quintessential boy-born-with-a-silver-spoon, signatory of the infamous 'Project for a New American Century', will regale us with his far-right Republican neo-conservativism. Bob Carr and John Howard will stroke his ego on our behalf, extending our hand of welcome to the esteemed gathering.

A great opportunity, our industry minister says, 'to tell the world about Australia's business advantage'. And for those can afford the small fee of US$5000, what an opportunity to press the flesh with 'an exclusive group of senior executives'. The NSW development department has come to the party as a 'host sponsor', no doubt assisting with venue access. Bob Carr was an honoured guest at last year's Forbes Global conference in Hong Kong, which also hosted the likes of David Davies from Philip Morris International, speaking on the 'responsible corporation', and Richard Perle of the American Enterprise Institute, Assistant Secretary of Defence under Reagan and Chair of the US Defence Policy Board until he had to resign in 2003 due to links with a US military contractor.

Last year's Forbes CEO conference, held in New York, also broke new ground. In the midst of the US presidential campaign it focused on the 'politics of business'. Forbes publisher and chair, Caspar Weinberger, led discussions on how to deal with 'harsh awareness from the media, NGOs, "stakeholders" and nasty web-loggers'. Delegates wrestled with urgent dilemmas, such as 'how can CEO's justify outsourcing?', and 'what is the best way to deal with activist shareholder organisations?' Weinberger, of course, as former Secretary of Defence (and Perle's boss) under Reagan, would have some knowledge of how to address such challenges. Weinberger joined Forbes in 1987 when his political career came to an end after being directly linked to providing covert assistance for right-wing guerrillas in Nicaragua, funded from arms sales to Iran.

Ironically enough, Forbes now leads the charge in the US business world against the 'Axis of Evil' (which of course includes Iran). Backing the US 'War on Terror' to the hilt, Forbes is one of Bush's key business sponsors. In January 2004 it proudly announced 'Bush is Best'. Since Steve Forbes took over in 1990 the company has grown into a neo-con propaganda house, claiming a five million-strong readership for its international edition Forbes Global, and close to a million for its US-based Forbes Magazine. It is very much a family affair, with Steve, Robert, Christopher and Timothy all in executive roles. In all its permutations - from its listings of 'top' companies, 'richest people' and 'celebrities', to its thirty-five monthly 'investment newsletters', its several magazines and conferences, its online video and weekly slot on Fox News, the Forbes machine preaches the neo-con script.

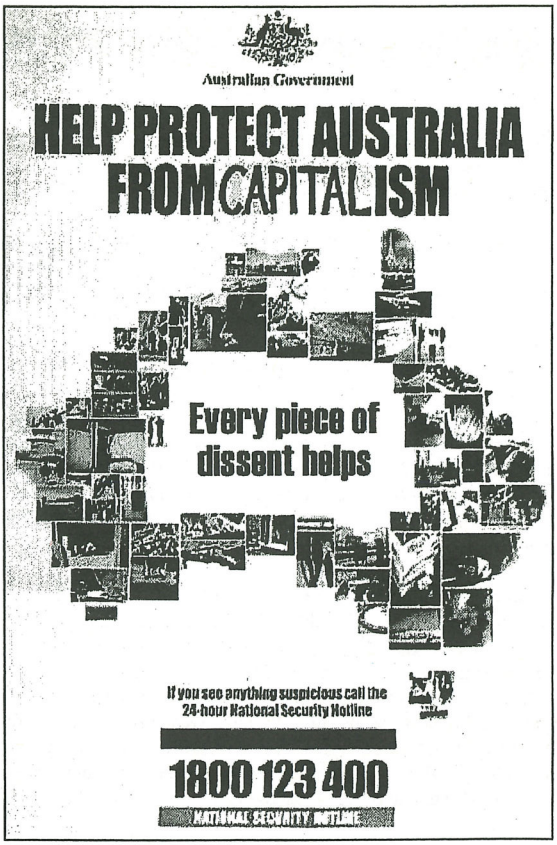
A glance at the Forbes archive reveals the business of neo-conservatism, warts and all. In October 2002 Forbes rattled the sabres for business, claiming that 'Hitting OPEC By Way of Baghdad' would cut oil prices and offer 'juicy deals' in a postwar Iraq. In March 2003, immediately before invasion, the magazine was charting the 'War Dividend', an oil 'gush' that would 'recoup the cost of an Iraqi war'. The 'cost' of invasion and reconstruction was estimated at '$50 billion or so', rather less than the $182 billion and rising as of 20 July 2005 (see costofwar.com). As if Iraq was not enough, in early 2003 the magazine mapped its own 'atlas of evil and discord', throwing Pakistan, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela into the ring, as well as the familiar candidates.

For Forbes, war spells profit: its Security Industry Analyst, a newsletter for 'stocks in homeland and security industries', picks booming defence contractors.

In March 2003, on the eve of the war on Iraq dollar-signs were flashing at the Analyst - 'over the last month', it gloated, 'we have seen a handsome war premium'. Today the newsletter compares the current security stocks boom with the 'early days' of the dot.com era. A report from 2003 on missile manufacturer Raytheon is typical: 'U.S. military might in Afghanistan and Iraq has heightened interest worldwide in our

weaponry... good news for defense contractor Raytheon'. With the sale of each missile system 'worth another 35 cents a share', the Analyst states 'higher Pentagon spending has returned the company to profitability', suggesting 'this stock likely won't be shot down again soon'.

The Security Industry Analyst position is simple: 'we like to invest in security companies that have dual streams of revenue' - that is, companies with government contracts. It actively lobbies for increased government expenditure on security services, and greater support for the 'security industry'. In 2002 for instance it argued the government should protect the entire industry from exposure to 'uncontrolled liability', extending coverage already provided for the defence giants such as Lockheed Martin. Elsewhere it calls for increased use of biometric testing and racial profiling by government authorities, while recommending companies which would benefit from greater take-up of the required technologies.


Australian Government
HELP PROTECT AUSTRALIA FROM CAPITALISM
Every piece of dissent helps
If you see anything suspicious call the 24-hour National Security Hotline
1800 123 400
NATIONAL SECURITY HOTLINE

Forbes Magazine, meanwhile, reassures investors they should never feel guilty about profiting from war. In early July this year, under the headline 'Screw Osama I'm buying Stocks', readers were offered valuable advice: 'The war on Terror is far from over and security stocks should have a place on your portfolio'. The day after the London bombings the headline story spoke loud and proud: 'Markets move higher as the world mourns'. Analysts picked-out the latest defence stocks for their readers, albeit with the caveat that 'it would be irresponsible for us or anyone to encourage profiting from another's misfortune... '.

Forbes - this quintessential front organization for neo-cons - has gained a foothold in the Australian political establishment. The Opera House conference clearly signals their confidence that now is the time to bring their message to Australia.

They may have miscalculated. Controversy about the conference is mounting, and in the most surprising of fields. Reports that Nicole Kidman would be speaking at the conference, for $1000 a minute, have appeared on celebrity pages, from the Sun to the Kerala Times, to the Sydney Morning Herald. She may now be reconsidering her involvement - not least as the Forbes top-100 'celebrity list' places her at number 74 (two slots behind the Eagles!).

The Opera House conference itself runs over three days, 30 August - 1 September, and is preceded by the Sydney Social Forum, 27-29 August, with a major public meeting planned at Circular Quay for the 29th. A number of campaign groups are organising to protest against the conference itself, with a demonstration on 30 August at 5 pm at the Opera House. The Forbes-Australia push will not go unquestioned.

***James Goodman** co-convenes the Research Initiative in International Activism, and teaches at UTS.*

ZE AUSTRALIAN STUDENT ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

ASEN is the national network of students active on environmental justice issues on campuses and in communities. As a network, we are made up of all state cross-campus environment networks, which include campus environment collectives. There are 37 campuses in Australia, and most have environment collectives.

In its biggest form, ASEN meets at the Students of Sustainability (SOS) conference every July. ASEN convenors and organisers also meet every January, usually at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra, to create a strategic plan for the year, and share skills and knowledge with new campus environment officers from across Australia. This year, we are starting our first annual Summer Training Camp, held from January 30 to February 3rd near Dungog, NSW. A week of intensive training and skill-up, in organising an environment collective and running a campaign, for students who will be taking on convening roles in their collectives and networks in the coming year.

There is a blurry line between ASEN as a network, and ASEN as an organisation. Although we have organisers who do fundraising, media statements, SOS organising and assisting campus environment collectives on behalf of 'ASEN'; the network is what YOU make of it. It relies on your participation for it to be strong. ASEN is constantly evolving, depending on what students are doing on campuses. Students use our network to organise local campaigns and strengthen their local work with information and support from others. Together, we also embark on national campaigns, such as climate change.

The story and history of ASEN differs from other student networks because of our tenuous relationship with the National Union of Students (NUS). Unlike other departments, the Environment Department of NUS was only created in the mid-1990s. It was created by a push from the grassroots who decided to intervene in NUS; an approach different from other departments, who are expected to organise the grassroots out of NUS National Office. Due to the size and diversity of the Environment Movement, this is clearly impossible: all NUS can hope to do is assist campus activists and facilitate communication on a national level. When someone not from the grassroots movement is in the position of NUS National Environment Officer, it is up to volunteers to take on this role. The effectiveness of ASEN has been dependent on this position, because it requires full-time organising. However, this year, we have had an ASEN-organisers email list, regular phone link ups, and people in each state taking on ASEN work.

This year it seems that everything is finally coming together. ASEN is coming into its own, as a super-organised, inspiring force poised on the brink of changing the Australian political landscape forever. The most dedicated, creative and intelligent student environmental activists of this generation are involved. We are working in partnerships and getting support from all Australian Environmental NGOs. We are going through a period of reflection and self-organisation to make sure we do it right.

As well as the focus on fighting ASOL/VSU, we are, as a national network, combining our efforts for a prolonged campaign on the root causes of climate change. We have two national projects running (from different states) – the national DVD project to make a 2nd ASEN DVD, and the national poster project, to encourage creative and thought-provoking political posters. Our intensive, 5-day summer training camp for campus and state environment officers and other interested students, will become an annual training to skill up new activists.

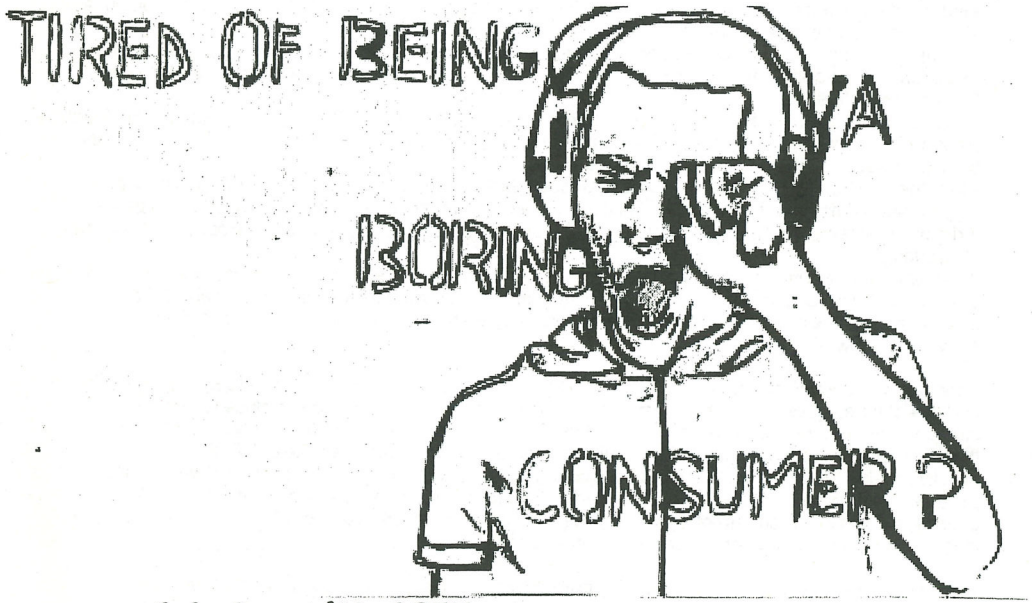
Although VSU presents the student environment movement with a significant hurdle, if we can overcome it, we will reach heights we may never have dreamed imaginable. We will be independent from the factionalism of student politics, with a steady income stream from membership and partnerships with the major environment NGOs, and a base in even more students than now.

Plans for the future include thorough training for new student activists, continued and stronger partnerships with indigenous struggles, reaching out to many more students through greater accessibility and going beyond the activist subculture clique. We also want to improve transmission of political education and activist history, increase awareness and introduce measures to address internal oppression (homophobia, sexism and racism within the environment movement), better strategic campaigning and focus our energies on one main campaign (such as climate change). We plan for more consistent relationships with the Environment NGOs, and to spread our roots into High Schools, where there is an enormous, and largely untapped, student organising base.

At times, it seems we aren't making a scrap of difference in a world so conservative and corporatised that our voices seem lost in daily economic transactions that Leaders think makes the world go around. We can't rely on governments, business or a mega NGO to save us, or anyone else. There is no justice; there is just us. We can rely on ourselves – and we, as ordinary people, are much better placed to make change in society, than elites so out of touch with the real world and real struggles of people they are irrelevant.

Our challenge, as student environment activists, is to reach out to other students, to involve them in our campaigns, to build the type of mass movements that we are seeing rise up in South America, Europe, North America, Asia – all over the world. To make our dreams of a better world a reality.

ASEN is still only at the beginning of its journey. It needs you to be a part of it. Come to the ASEN meeting on Sunday at 1pm. ASEN is nothing without YOUR campus environment collective. Together we are stronger as part of a NATIONAL network of environment collectives. Bring it on!



....come 'n' play with ASEN....

Voluntary Student Unionism and the Environment Movement

Student organisations in Australia have a long and proud history of nurturing activism and dissent, and have played a major role in spearheading campaigns for peace and social justice. The student environment movement, whilst a relatively recent development in the history of Australian student activism, has been an integral part of student organising, and most student organisations now have environment departments. Student organisations have been a major asset in the broader environment movement. The involvement of student unions provides a strong impetus to a campaign through their activist base, resources, space to collectively organise, ability to disseminate information, and mobilise support from a large audience. Some examples of where students have played a key role in the Australian environment movement's history include:

- The trailblazing 'freedom rides' to expose racism against Indigenous people were organised through Sydney Uni SRC in the 1960s.
- Hundreds of students, from Tasmania and the mainland, involved in the Franklin Dam Campaign, and since then, countless other forest blockades and campaigns.
- Support from the ANU student union was the one of the main reasons Indigenous activists who established the Aboriginal Tent Embassy on the lawns of Parliament House were able to survive the first freezing winter.
- Students were heavily involved in the struggle to stop the Jabiluka uranium mine in Kakadu National Park on Mirrar country. Hundreds of students, mobilised through their student unions, travelled to the blockade and participated in other, city-based actions.
- Fourteen years ago, the first 'Students of Sustainability' (SoS) conference was held. It is now the biggest annual national event for the Australian environment movement, bringing together students, Indigenous elders, NGOs and academics for a week of campaign planning, skillshares, discussion and networking.
- Student union environment collectives have fostered and produced many prominent environmental advocates. For example, Australian Greens Senator Kerry Nettle was the UNSW Student Guild Environment Officer in 1996. Student union organising trains students for a lifetime of activism and social change work.

Although student unions, both campus ones and the National Union of Students (NUS) are not perfect and are at times guilty of devaluing environment departments, they are still the place where most student environment activists – indeed most student activists in general – get involved. Walk into the office of any student organisation in this country and you're more than likely to find a beehive of activists making banners and placards, doing ring-arounds to new students, laying up leaflets and posters to advertise protests and events, and putting together student papers. Even when a student council executive is made up of right-wingers (rare, but occasionally true), student activists still cluster in that space, use it, and fight for it in campus elections.

Student organisations are the spaces (in a physical and metaphorical sense) which attract new students to get involved, and provide a focus for student activity and dissent on campus. Far from

subplot:

a convergence of anarchistic ideas and actions

in the leadup to protests against the Forbes 500 Global CEO Conference

Friday 26th - Monday 29th August

At the Sydney Opera House from August 30th, as part of the Forbes Global CEO conference, the heads of some of the richest and most influential corporations in the world will gather. A mocking fuck you from those responsible for labour abuses, environmental destruction, war profiteering, etc, etc. A fuck you that implies nothing we do can resist the paths they plot for global capitalism.

But every storyline is made up of many subplots. This is ours.

Subplot aims to explore our affinities though a diversity of workshops around ideas and tactics of organised autonomous resistance, for the Forbes protests and ongoing resistance. So bring your creativity and inspiration. And your anger and frustration. We want to discuss all aspects of resistance and creating revolutionary change.

Subplot is happening alongside the Sydney Social Forum (SSF). On Saturday we will be presenting a stream of workshops as part of the SSF in an effort to build connections with other groups whose struggles overlap with ours. The next two days will be held at a nearby but separate venue, in order to create a space to explore our political commonalities. On the Monday time and space will be set aside to, hopefully, put the ideas, networks and affinities developed at the conference into practice in preparation for the Forbes protests. The weekend will also have plenty of time for socialising and it all starts, of course, with a launch party on Friday night.

Subplot will always be a work in progress, made from what all participants bring. If you'd like to organise a workshop or raise ideas you think need to be discussed, please get in touch.

Contacts:
Dave 0412 372 131
Sunil 0425 210 979
website: mutineers.blogspot.com
mutineers@graffiti.net

friday 26 august

the launch party
7:30pm Duck & Swan
Rose St, Chippendale

saturday 27 august

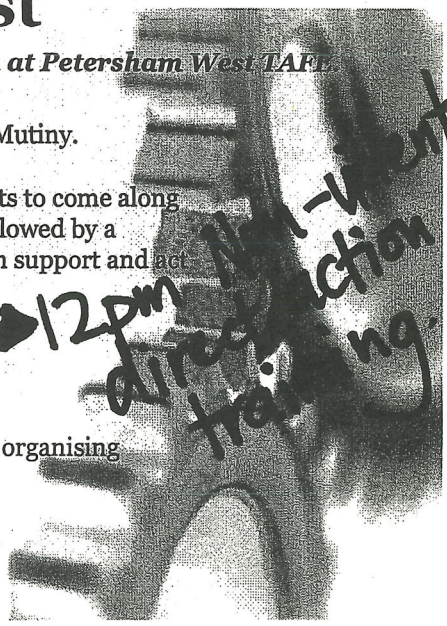
as part of Sydney Social Forum at Petersham West TAFE

10:30 - Workshop on the Sydney anti-war group Mutiny.

12:00 - Connecting struggles - any group that wants to come along and give a short blurb about what they're doing followed by a discussion about how various political struggles can support and act in solidarity with each other.

14:30 - Forbes history and practical info-sharing/ with legal stuff + anyone else with info to pass on.

16:00 - Discussion about summit protests, tactics, organising and beyond.



sunday 28th august

at the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre.

Sunday is generally themed around how it is still possible to enact revolutionary struggle/politics in the face of the ever-increasing dominance of right-wing conservative ideologies in society. There will be a final session dedicated to an open forum for all to discuss ideas raised throughout the day from the workshops.

10:15 - welcome to country (Auntie Bowie Hickey)

10:30 - opening session

11:30 - climate change
anarcha feminism, autonomy and everyday liberation
halliburton, war profiteering and people power
universities and the defence industry

12:30 - anti-racism
defending unionism
abolishing private property

13:30 - lunch

14:30 - utopias: practical and ridiculous
media activism
autonomous marxism
south coast aboriginal tent embassy

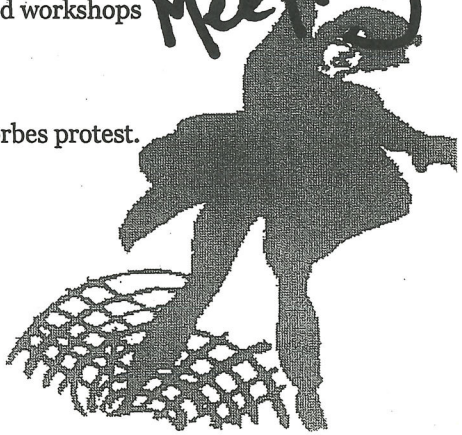
15:30 - work: intensification and refusal
the Hickey campaign and police corruption
how the right think
lost in space: reclaiming place and power

16:45 - closing session: all-in discussion of ideas and workshops

18:00 - close of day

19:00 - spokescouncil at **STUCCO** to talk about Forbes protest.

1 til 4pm
Australian Student Enviro Network (structure) Meeting.



monday 29 august

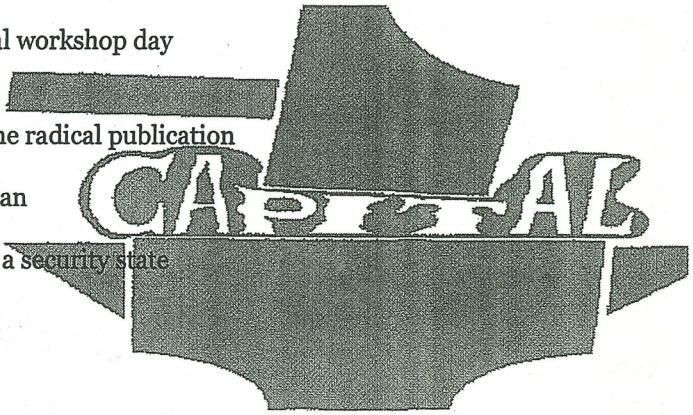
at the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre.

Monday has been set aside as a practical workshop day. We set this as the day for people to put on practical workshops aimed at the Forbes protests but if you've got something you want to do which isn't specifically protest-related that's fine too. In the afternoon there will be one massive workshops, concentrating on firstly legal info, followed by a tactics focussed workshop. This session can also be divided into smaller groups to focus on more specific topics.

10:15 - all-in about practical workshop day

11:00 - guerilla gardening
creating a new online radical publication
queeruption
movement action plan

12:00 - fear and loathing in a security state
guerrilla art
experiences of work
drumming



13:00 - lunch
14:00 - legal, other info-sharing, tactics, direct action, skill-sharing all-in session

contact people if you need:

billeting

If you're not from Sydney and need a place to stay, please contact Nelson at bluesigh@graffiti.net or 0412 328 231. Also, if you're from Sydney, and have some spare space please get in touch too.

workshops

Subplot will always be a work in progress, so if you have an idea for a workshop please get in contact with Dave (0412 372 131) or Sunil (0425 210 979), or via email at mutineers@graffiti.net

food

Lunch will be provided on sunday at the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre by Food Not Bombs, vegan food included. If you have food allergies or queries please send an email to mutineers@graffiti.net

the image that Brendan Nelson would like to paint of student representatives, they are mostly dedicated, underpaid, overworked, and passionate about changing the world. What gives them the ability to actually have a shot at doing this – through campaigns, through student media, through inspiring ordinary students to get involved in progressive causes – is universal membership of student organisations. Everyone is a member, because everyone needs a student union to stand up for their rights on campus and in broader society. Everyone (except the Liberals) benefits from the struggle for social change. Together, students are stronger, and our student organisations are the vehicle through which we exercise that strength.

All this may be about to change.

On March 15 2005, a joint meeting of the Liberal and National Party in Canberra cleared a piece of legislation for introduction into the Federal Parliament called the Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Student Union Fees) Bill - commonly known as Anti Student Organisation Legislation (ASOL) or Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU). The legislation prohibits universities from requiring a person to become a member of a student association and requiring a student to pay fees for non-academic student services. This means the end of universal membership of student unions in Australia - and student unions, starved of funds, will either die or be much weaker.

It's obvious why the government wants to do this - to crush student dissent to their environmentally destructive, racist, homophobic and sexist policies. Students have always been at the core of progressive social movements in society. Student unions have the power to hold arrogant, repressive governments to account - like the student protests against the Vietnam war, the students all over the world who have overthrown dictatorships, and the students today who campaign for environmental justice on a whole range of issues - climate change, forests, fair trade, anti-nuclear, indigenous rights, and more.

It is no coincidence this attack on students' right to collectively organise comes in the context of broader attacks on trade unions, recent funding cuts to community environment groups, removing funding from community environment groups and the state conservation councils for any activity deemed 'political', and increasingly draconian 'counter-terrorism' laws which, amongst other things, give the government power to criminalise a range of oppositional political activity traditionally viewed as legitimate. Removing universal membership of student unions is part of this broader attack on dissent in society. Howard wants the Liberals to be spared the burden of student political activity, because it challenges their power! There is no room for critical voices in Howard's Australia.

The National Union of Students, campus student organisations, and the Australian Student Environment Network are fighting a huge student and broader public campaign against ASOL/VSU. We are fighting with passion and determination, intent that we can, if not stop completely, at least force changes to the legislation that will make it less damaging.

However, with a Coalition Senate majority, there is a very real chance VSU/ ASOL legislation will be passed in some form. Unless Vice-Chancellors refuse to implement it on their campuses, we are faced with some profound challenges to the way we organise. It is better to be talking about these issues now than to wait until we are potentially confronted with an insolvent National Union of Students and student organisations collapsing like dominos at the start of next year. This is why a big focus of this years' SoS Conference is fighting VSU, aiming to defeat it as students have done before; but also thinking about options for the student movement post-VSU, should it be introduced. It is essential that every environmental activist here commits to being part of the VSU campaign, because it will affect every campaign we are running now and every campaign in the future. It is equally important we all think about how we can build a movement that grows stronger, VSU or no VSU, because our vision of a strong student environment network is one that has the potential to radicalise Australian society and involve many more people in activism and social change. Look around you at this conference, think about all the networks and friends everyone here has. It's pretty amazing, and if we can harness all this energy and people power, then we can not only fight VSU, we can build a movement so strong that no government has the potential to destroy it with a piece of legislation.

Anna Rose is the National Environment Officer for the National Union of Students (NUS) and the Australian Student Environment Network (ASEN) Convenor.

Expose the Climate Hypocrites!

Converge on the Climate Hypocrite Pact's First Meeting this November

The Australian Student Environment Network has announced a call-out for grassroots climate activists to converge in a climate carnivale of protest at the first meeting of the Climate Hypocrite Pact this November in Adelaide.

Read on to find out why..
On July 28th this year, a new climate agreement was announced between some of the world's worst greenhouse polluters - Australia, the United States, India, China and South Korea - ostensibly to commercially develop technological solutions to climate change.

The first meeting of the climate hypocrite pact will be held in Adelaide in November, where government representatives from each of the five countries will negotiate the details of the agreement, which the Howard Government sees as an "alternative to the Kyoto Protocol".

The climate hypocrite pact is yet another indication of the Howard government's irresponsible, industry-driven approach to climate change. Thinking that technology can save us from climate change is like rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Addressing climate change requires immediate and fundamental changes to the way our oil and coal-dependant society and economy is structured.

The climate secret pact aims for the development of commercially viable technologies by 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol comes into effect. By this time, temperature increases will have begun to majorly disturb ecosystems and mosquito-spread disease will be spreading further, rising sea levels and more extreme weather will have created millions more climate refugees, agricultural crops will have begun to fail, and iconic natural wonders like the Daintree, Great Barrier Reef, and the Snowy Mountains will be well on their way to destruction.

Meanwhile, our government sits in corporate boardrooms with the major coal, oil and gas companies and funds expensive, unproven technological solutions like geosequestration (burying emissions underground) whilst slashing funding for renewable energy. "We need to ensure that we develop technologies that will see energy expand, because we need more energy," stated Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell, who also recently shocked the environmental community by denying that burning coal causes greenhouse emissions. (The denial was made in a submission by Senator Campbell to a Federal court challenge by a Qld environmental group, Wildlife Whitsunday. He made the statement on August 5, just days after warning Australians of the inevitability of global warming.)

Australia has a mandatory renewable energy target of about 2 per cent of all electricity production, but the Government has refused to extend it. It is widely acknowledged in the environment movement that the reason for this, and the general reluctance of the Federal government to deal with climate change in any constructive manner, is the close links between the Australian coal industry and the government.

Even the former government chief climate change official has stated that The Federal Government allows the fossil fuel, energy and mining industries too much influence on greenhouse policies, including the decision not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

Gwen Andrews, the Australian Greenhouse Office chief executive until 2002, has publicly stated that she was never asked to brief the Prime Minister, John Howard, on climate change during her four years in the role. She has confirmed what many environmentalists have been arguing for years – that energy, mining and resource interests are essentially directing Australia's policy on climate change.

Documents obtained under freedom of information legislation show multinationals warned the Government before last year's energy white paper - which largely reflected their thinking - that reducing emissions might endanger investment. These documents, from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, show that:

- BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto said a national emissions trading scheme was "premature".
- The American oil giant Exxon Mobil advised "investments in current renewable energy technology are not economical", saying evidence on climate change was inconclusive.
- BHP Billiton warned "greenhouse imposts could threaten the competitive position of Australia" and the Minerals Council of Australia said targeting the energy sector over emissions "should be avoided".
- Fossil fuel companies called for government funding for research into geosequestration - burying carbon dioxide from coal-fired power plants - as the main strategy to reduce emissions.

Between 1998 and 2004, five big resource companies gave at least $1.69 million to the Coalition and its foundations, according to the Australian Electoral Commission. Labor got $412,311 from the same sources in that period. The government chief scientist until May, Robin Batterham, is a Rio Tinto executive and supports geosequestration. Lyall Howard, Mr Howard's nephew, is the firm's government affairs manager.

Focusing on technology to make burning fossil fuels cleaner instead of reducing emissions is just the latest in a series of climate-change inducing actions by Australia. The climate hypocrite pact's five member countries include four of the world's biggest coal producers - China, USA, India and Australia. "This is all about taxpayers' money being diverted from developing clean, renewable technologies to try to make burning coal less dirty," stated Greens Senator Bob Brown.

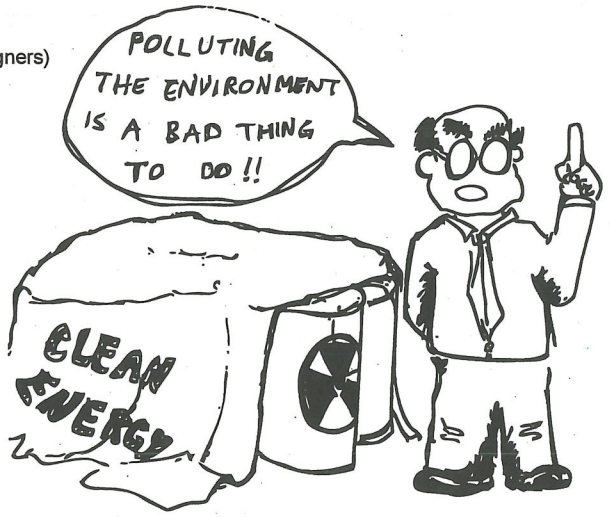
Down with climate change profiteers! Burning coal is like, *sooo* 18th century. No new coal, a clean energy future for Australia!!

See you in Adelaide this November!
Contact Anna for more details at info@asen.org.au, or call 0410 375 755.

Australian Student Environment Network
www.asen.org.au

Rising Tide Newcastle
(grassroots climate change campaigners)
www.risingtide.org.au

Rising Tide UK
www.risingtide.org.uk



Climate Refugees:
The HIDDEN CO$T of climate change

This month marks World Refugee Day, and it is timely and appropriate to acknowledge both the plight and the courage of refugees, including those who have sought asylum here in Australia. This day could also be a time for reflection on what may be another crisis over the horizon: the beginning of a new wave of refugees, those fleeing human-induced climate change.

The "Tampa crisis" in 2001 was a significant national event both in terms of the looming federal election and the subsequent strengthening of support for the refugee advocacy movement as the details gained public coverage. However, the response of the then US President Bill Clinton was completely unexpected in the context of border control debates: *"If you're worried about 400 people, you just let the world keep warming up like this for the next 50 years and your grandchildren will be worried about 400,000 people."* This points the way to an issue that is both complex and exceedingly urgent.

In February 2003, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair stated:
"We face a situation in which 50 million people in Asia could be killed or displaced by floods, further swathes of Africa could be reduced to desert, accompanied by massive deforestation in central and South America, and huge increases in disease, particularly malaria. And it is the poorest countries, particularly in Asia and Africa, which will suffer the most devastating effects of these changes."

These two world leaders have an understanding of climate change and climate refugees that exceeds the almost non-existent public discussion in Australia. Yet there is an immediate threat to the habitability of islands and nations in our region of the world - the Pacific. The impacts of climate change, including increased periods of drought, incremental sea-level rises, storm surges and more frequent floods, will affect food and water security.

These factors are probably going to be less "spectacular" than a hurricane or cyclone, yet will probably cause many island states to become uninhabitable. A number of Pacific leaders, including from the Federated States of Micronesia, Maldives and Tuvalu, have made bold statements about the lack of regard for the fate of small island states as rising seas envelope land, contaminate water and wash away crop gardens.

Of those who are displaced, where will they go? Do we believe they will stay where they are and quietly starve? No, they will do what any of us would, move and seek refuge elsewhere. And, do we, as the highest per capita greenhouse polluters in the industrialised world, have a responsibility to respond to them? Absolutely. The "polluter pays" principle is enshrined in the Rio Declaration of the World Earth Summit of 1992.

While the concept of environmental refugees is not new and there is increasing interest in climate refugees, there is no legal recognition of either, providing no assurances for peoples displaced by climate change. The International Red Cross, in its World Disasters Report 2001 suggested that 25 million people (up to 58 per cent of all current refugees) may already be environmental refugees. These people are fleeing a multitude of disruptions, and, it appears, global warming is one of them.

What is daunting is the extreme numbers of climate refugees predicted for the coming decade. One of the major authorities on the topic, Norman Myers, of Oxford University, says there could well be 150 million climate refugees on the move within 50 years, including at least 75 million in the Asia-Pacific region. Rather than scaring ourselves into a fortress mentality, a civilised humanitarian response would be to acknowledge that over the past 150 years Australia has disproportionately contributed to global warming, and we have a moral obligation to assist people to live in their countries for as long as possible and provide asylum for them when people are forced to leave their homes because of climate change.

No one would dare argue that any specific extreme weather event is caused by climate change, however the world increasingly recognises that climate change exacerbates extremes in weather, such as heat waves in Europe and bush fires in Canberra in 2003. The US and Australian governments continue to focus on the inadequacies of Kyoto and perceived economic costs of a transition to a less carbon-intensive future. Not surprisingly, the human dimension of climate change is largely missing from the public realm.

Already it is becoming obvious that, without immediate action, the costs of this will be economic tragedy and human misery, and the worst of the pain will be felt by the poorest nations (ironically, those least responsible for global warming). And yet without legal recognition of environmental refugees, peoples displaced because of climate change are the most disadvantaged peoples in climate change scenarios.

The Pacific island nation of Tuvalu has signed an agreement with New Zealand to relocate many of its citizens over the coming decades. When the Tuvaluan Government approached Australia to undertake a similar commitment, the response demonstrated a complete lack of awareness of climate change science and impacts. Unknown to the majority of Australians is the fact that our government refused to consider accepting Tuvaluans migrating to Australia because climate change was "unproven", and so there was insufficient basis to change immigration policy.

We need to understand that countries like Australia, as major per capita contributors of greenhouse pollution, bear a significant responsibility for this displacement. Accordingly, in recognition of this fact, we must make room for environmental refugees, as well as changing policies that contribute to the creation of more ecologically displaced people. Sadly, the Australian Government has consistently shown that it has no intention of making deep cuts in emissions through reducing consumption, switching to renewable energy generation or mandating energy efficiency measures. Yet we know that what is required is immediate and dramatic action on global warming. This will greatly ameliorate the human costs of climate change, and the creation of climate refugees.

So, it will be up to the Australian community to ensure the necessary action is taken. We need to recognise environmental refugees, based on an acceptance that they are real, and that they result from genuine ecological disruptions (including global warming). Perhaps in the slightly longer term Australia will need to create an environmental refugee program as an element of its broader refugee program. This should not be at the expense of other asylum seeker quotas.

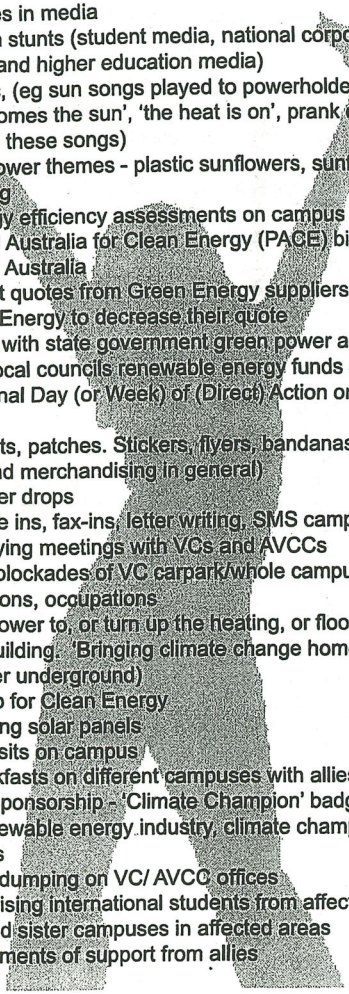
Australia should also consider how its aid program is delivered, and investigate whether there needs to be increased funding available for communities who are impacted by human-induced climate change. Australia's foreign aid program is still shamefully low and should be increased to reflect an adequate proportion of our Gross National Income and to meet the OECD target of 0.7 per cent of GNI.

It is not often that potentially massive disasters can be averted through a proactive, visionary and international response. Inaction could well mean disaster for Australia, and literally millions of displaced people in our region - causing mass migrations on a scale previously only imagined. As the Tampa crisis showed, by the time people are physically seeking refuge in Australia, the chances of having a reasoned and compassionate debate is non-existent with the politics currently at play in this country. But if we act now as a community and force the government to do the same, we will potentially be able to turn a disaster around before it reaches a point of crisis. This is exactly what can, and must, happen with climate refugees. We have the knowledge - the only thing lacking is political will. Action now may make future world refugee days a cause for celebration, not, as it is now, a time to be embarrassed to be an Australian.

-By Stephanie Long and Cam Walker

Climate Change Campaign... Tactics Brainstorm

these can be used on your own campuses to pressure your Vice-Chancellors and Uni Administrations



- Expose coal ties to universities
- Sign-on letter of social justice, enviro groups/figures
- Campus referendums
- Student council referendums
- Facility Management on campuses supporting campaign
- Letters and postcards to VC and AVCC
- Giant sun costumes
- Attend at Uni Administration meeting
- Articles in media
- Media stunts (student media, national corporate media and higher education media)
- Music, (eg sun songs played to powerholders, 'here comes the sun', 'the heat is on', prank calls playing these songs)
- Sunflower themes - plastic sunflowers, sunflower chalking
- Energy efficiency assessments on campus
- Pedal Australia for Clean Energy (PACE) bike ride around Australia
- 1. Get quotes from Green Energy suppliers, 2. Get Green Energy to decrease their quote
- Work with state government green power agencies
- Get local councils renewable energy funds on side
- National Day (or Week) of (Direct) Action on campuses
- T-shirts, patches. Stickers, flyers, bandanas (materials and merchandising in general)
- Banner drops
- Phone ins, fax-ins, letter writing, SMS campaign
- Lobbying meetings with VCs and AVCCs
- Bike blockades of VC carpark/whole campuses
- Lock-ons, occupations
- Cut power to, or turn up the heating, or flood their building. 'Bringing climate change home (aka weather underground)
- Camp for Clean Energy
- Sticking solar panels
- Tree-sits on campus
- Breakfasts on different campuses with allies & allies sponsorship - 'Climate Champion' badges eg for renewable energy industry, climate champion awards
- Coal dumping on VC/ AVCC offices
- Mobilising international students from affected areas and sister campuses in affected areas
- Statements of support from allies
- Field of sunflowers on front lawns
- Forum/ Lectures with key speakers (invite the Uni admin) - perhaps travelling
- Mock court case (or real one) taking AVCC to court as climate criminals
- Hijack coal ships (turn to piracy arggh beware the ASEN pirate)
- Celebrity and alumni endorsements
- Launch of the Energetics Report at ACTS conference and surrounding media eg. joint Energetics-Greenpeace - ASEN press conference
- Individual campuses press conferences
- Save the Ales - getting beer students
- Getting colleges to turn off their power for a night
- Turn off your power for an hour across several campuses
- Solar car drag racing on unis (get science nerds involved)
- Computer hacking to AVCC website (get computer nerds involved)
- Get student media reporters to interview the VCs about this issues
- Cows on the front lawns with notices about how much they would have to far to make the same amount of greenhouse emissions
- Wearing wetsuits/ snorkels/ flippers/ carrying cardboard boats around campus (snorkel and divers societies). Rip Curl Sponsorship?
- Mark sea level rise on Uni buildings
- Actions in campus ponds/ lakes (La Trobe, Monash, Wollongong all have water features)
- Super Solar vs Cranky Coal boxing matches in public
- Captain Planet powerpoint slideshow
- Dressing up as polar bears and penguins - talking about the poles melting. Build an igloo.
- Dumping sand on campus and having student sand castle making competition (sea level rise). Have a beach party - get the party clubs on board.)
- Setting up a fake wind farm on campus
- Setting up a mock coal fired power station on campus
- All I want for Christmas... is 100% clean energy (the AVCC meeting we are targeting is December 13th)
- Clean energy dance or dance-off against Dirty Coal . Clean energy conga line.
- Radical cheerleading.

corporate culprits and accomplices funding climate change, fueling injustice

from Friends of the Earth

Governments, corporations and banks continue to subsidise and invest in fossil fuel energy and infrastructure. In Australia, fossil fuel industries attract $6,000 million in government subsidies, whereas renewable energy receives $200 million in government support. Australia's historical dependence on fossil fuels for energy has been increased through massive direct and indirect subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. A 1996 report of the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories estimated direct subsidies at $2,000 million a year. Indirect subsidies such as tax incentives, start-up grants, preferential purchasing agreements for oil, and biased market structures add an additional $4,000 million to the figure.

The World Bank continues to fund fossil fuel energy projects at a rate 25 times greater than its funding for renewable energy projects. Fossil fuel burning from post 1992 World Bank projects will eventually contribute an immense burden of carbon dioxide to the earth's atmosphere –38 billion tonnes in total -equivalent to 1.7 times the total emitted by all the world's countries in 1996.

Corporations continue to pay lip service to eliminating fossil fuel use whilst using renewable energy investments to give themselves a "clean and green" image. For example, in March, 1999, BP bought Solarex for $45 million, making it the largest solar company in the world. It's not difficult for BP to be the largest solar company in the world. The $45 million it spent on Solarex, is a fraction of the $400 million in transfer taxes associated with the purchase of ARCO, which cost $26.5 billion. In turn, the ARCO purchase made 'Beyond Petroleum' the largest fossil fuel company in the world. ARCO will spend $5 billion in the next five years on oil exploration and production.

references:

- Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. "The Heat is On: Australia's Greenhouse Future," Report of the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and Arts References Committee. November 2000.
- Transnational Resource and Action Centre. "Greenhouse Gangsters vs. Climate Justice". November 1999.
- Wysham, D. The World Bank - Funding Climate Change. Cold Catches Fire, A SEED Europe, November 2000.

some stuff to know about the neocons

Neocons ("neoconservatives") such as Steve Forbes assert world trade is a moral imperative and as such trade promotes democracy, political freedom and respect for human rights in trade participating nations.

For example, US President George W Bush defends his free-trade agenda in moralistic terms. "Open trade is not just an economic opportunity, it is a moral imperative," he declared in a May 7, 2001, speech. "Trade creates jobs for the unemployed. When we negotiate for open markets, we're providing new hope for the world's poor. And when we promote open trade, we are promoting political freedom."

The claims of providing "new hope for the world's poor" remain highly controversial when tested by actual data - unfortunately, income and wealth equality is not among the benefits promoted by trade.

just where do the neocons get their moral instruction?

The Bible provides no instruction on free trade and it's not one of the Ten Commandments. Jesus did not tell people to follow him along the road to free trade. In fact, there is nothing in the US constitution that requires them to support free trade.

Perhaps their moral authority comes from controlling the most lethal military machine in human history? The US military budget request for Fiscal Year 2005 is $420.7 billion. For Fiscal Year 2004, it was $399.1 billion; for 2003, $396.1 billion; for 2002, $343.2 billion; and for 2001, $310 billion. In the first term of George W Bush's presidency, the US spent $1.5 trillion on its military. That is more than the entire gross domestic product of China in 2004.

BACKGROUNDER: FREEPORT-RIO TINTO'S MINE IN WEST PAPUA

History and connection between Freeport and Human Rights violations in Papua

The history of Indonesian government and US interests in West Papua are intertwined with the exploitation of the Grasberg copper-gold deposit. The widely criticised UN "act of free choice" handover of control over West Papua from the Netherlands to the Indonesian government facilitated Freeport's establishment during the early days of the Soeharto New Order military dictatorship.

Human rights violations committed by the Indonesian military in the interests of the Freeport mine began in 1977, hidden under the cloak of the longstanding Martial Law (Daerah Operasi Militer) in West Papua which lasted twenty years from 1978 until 1998.

Local people's disadvantage in the mine area resulted in backlash in 1977 when Amungme and six other local tribes blew up the company's pipeline, followed by deadly retaliation by security forces. Community gardens and houses were destroyed, and many Amungme people were killed. Official figures from the Indonesian government state that the number of deaths in the 1977 incident in the mine town of Tembagapura was 900, while data from local people suggest twice this many killed.

Amungme tribal land was taken without just compensation. The Amungme and other local tribes have been robbed of their legal and political rights as well as their rights to the benefits of natural resources on their land. They have become oppressed outsiders, now outnumbered on their own land.

Freeport's population resettlement schemes have victimized the Amungme people further. In 1980, many Amungme people were evicted from their mountain homes and resettled in the lowland plains, pushed to adopt food crops very different from their traditional staples. This resulted in a large number of deaths due to lowland-endemic malaria and malnutrition.

Freeport-Rio Tinto payments to the Indonesian Military (TNI)

Freeport-Rio Tinto provide cash, logistical and infrastructure support to the Indonesian security forces, both police and military, in their area of operations. Freeport-Rio Tinto has recently admitted paying the Indonesian Defense Forces (TNI) on average about $5.5 million annually into a communal fund for 2300 military personnel, and provides local soldiers with a monthly salary bonus of about Rp 400,000. Aside from official payments, Freeport-Rio Tinto is also alleged to have made individual payments of millions of dollars to top-ranking military officials. (1)

In 2001, Freeport-Rio Tinto signed a Trust Fund agreement with the Amungme and Kamoro villagers living closest to the mining operations providing for payments of an initial $2.5 million and $500,000 each year thereafter. Compare this with the US$5.5 million per year paid by Freeport-Rio Tinto to the Indonesian military whom the Amungme accuse of systematic oppression of their human rights.

Freeport Indonesia and Environment Destruction

Freeport-Rio Tinto's activities have irreversibly altered the natural landscape. The Yet Segel Ongop Segel, aka Grasberg Mountain has become a 700 m deep hole, despite the mountain being a sacred site revered as a mother to the Amungme tribe. The sacred Lake Wanagon has also been destroyed, turned into a toxic, acidic dump for Freeport-Rio Tinto's waste rock (known as overburden,).

The Freeport-Rio Tinto owned Grasberg mine also pollutes the Aghawagon, Otomona and Ajkwa Rivers through its direct riverine dumping of mine waste (known as tailings): To be specific, more than 200 000 tons of tailings are dumped every day into the Aghawagon River, thence flowing into the Otomona and Ajkwa. Tailings particles which do not settle out on land end up in the Arafura Sea. From a study conducted using photos from the Landsat satellite in 2000, it was revealed that the Freeport-Rio Tinto mining operation has contaminated 35 820 hectares of lowland forest and 84 158 hectares of the Arafura sea.

On 4 May 2000, a landslide at the Lake Wanagon waste dump killed 4 of Freeport-Rio Tinto's subcontractors. That was the third catastrophic collapse at Lake Wanagon, since the June 1998 and 21 March 2000 incidents. The piling of waste rock at Lake Wanagon is entirely unsustainable, whether at the

current mining rate of 650 000 tons per day and 200 000 tons of ore processed per day, or the maximum approved level of 300 000 tons per day. The risks are compounded by the elevation of the waste dump, seismic activity in the area, and a rainfall of 3-6 meters per year. These risks are well known by Freeport; in fact they are listed in the Environment Impact Analysis (AMDAL), although the risks are seemingly cast aside in Freeport-Rio Tinto's environment management scheme.

Lake Wanagon's use as a waste dump also contravenes provisions in the ILO Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries due to the sacred nature of the lake to the indigenous Amungme people as an isore,i or men's house, and place of repose of the Amungme spiritual ancestors.

The most recent accident occurred on 9 October 2003, when a catastrophic landslide killed 8 workers and injured 5 more in the steeply sloping (up to 48 degrees) Grasberg mine pit. This incident is sufficient for the government to level heavy sanctions against Freeport-Rio Tinto. From another perspective, the extremely high rate of mining and ore processing clearly exceeds the capacity of the environment to cope with pollution from the mine, and is also reason for government intervention.

Unjust Mining Contract of Work

In 1967, the Indonesian New Order regime signed a 30-year mining Contract of Work with Freeport, the very first mineral extraction activity in the New Order regime. The corrupt former Indonesian president, Soeharto, went through a series of speculative legal and political manoeuvres to ensure the foreign investment, despite the disputed status of West Papua as part of the Indonesian state. Until today, most West Papuans do not acknowledge integration with Indonesia as valid and are opposed to PT. Freeport-Rio Tinto's deal with the Indonesian government as they do not recognise Indonesian sovereignty and were not consulted or involved in the mine approval process. Political acts of self-assertion by West Papuan leaders and the wider community include: the dispatch of Team 100 led by Tom Beanal in 1999 to demand Papua independence from the former Indonesian president, BJ Habibie; The Grand Summit in 2000 organized by Papuan indigenous Council; and the 2nd National Congress of Papua held from 29 May - 4 June 2000.

The original contract of work has been condemned because it omits the following:
- Freeport's obligation to manage the environment according to international standards;
- Calculations on value and price of the mineral deposit;
- Freeport's obligation to pay royalties;
- Freeport's obligation to pay an environmental reclamation bond;
- Freeport's obligation or regulations for mine closure
- Freeport's obligation to cooperate with local communities.

In December 1991, six years before the original Freeport Contract of Work ended, the company signed a renewed Contract of Work with the Indonesian government (later known as the 1991 Contract of Work). The 1991 Contract of Work also had many shortcomings:

- The 1991 Contract of Work was signed while PTFI was carrying out gold mining operations which were not in compliance with the original 1967 Contract of Work.

- Like the 1967 Contract of Work, the 1991 Contract of Work was drafted and signed without any participation from the people of West Papua. It contains no obligations upon Freeport to manage and protect the environment, nor any obligations regarding mine closure, nor obligations pertaining to indigenous rights and local peoples interests.

Conclusion

Freeport-Rio Tinto is operating a mine under a Contract of Work which is deeply flawed, and the mine's operation has led to gross human rights violations and contributed to genocide in the form of the cultural, economical, and social destruction of Papuan indigenous peoples. Therefore, a fundamental change is required through renegotiation of the Freeport-Rio Tinto Contract of Work.

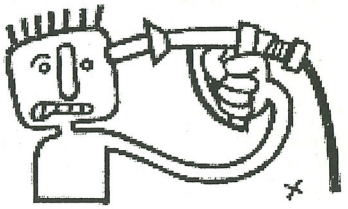
Endnotes:

(1) See The Thompson & Thomson Report 'MINING: Freeport Paid Millions to Military'; and Kompas: Jumat, 14 Maret 2003

(2) See Freeport's own 'Brief History' *http://www.fcx.com/aboutus/briefhis.htm*

Exxon Mobil is the world's second-largest oil company. They engage in oil and gas exploration, production, supply, transportation, and marketing around the world. Exxon Mobil's 45 refineries in 25 countries have a capacity of producing 6.3 million barrels per day. The company supplies refined products to 42,000 service stations in more than 100 countries that operate under the Exxon, Esso, and Mobil brands. Exxon Mobil is also a major petrochemical producer. (knowmore.org)

ExxonMobil



According to US State Department papers seen by the Guardian, President G. Bush's decision not to sign the United States up to the Kyoto protocol was influenced by pressure from ExxonMobil. The documents confirmed the widely believed suspicions of how intimate the corporation is with the Bush Administration and its policy formulation. The papers were discovered as Tony Blair was engaged in discussions on climate change in the lead up to the July G8 meeting.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- US Administration briefing papers from between 2001 and 2004 have revealed the administration thanking Exxon executives for their "active involvement" in the determination of climate change policy, and in offering their advice on what policies would be acceptable to the company.

- Studies from FOE International and other institutes, (2004) have found that ExxonMobil if to blame for around five percent of greenhouse gases that are causing global warming. (foe.org/camps/int/exxon) (niwa.cri.nz)

- No emission reduction targets have been set by ExxonMobil and the company has confirmed that its greenhouse gas emissions increased by 2% in 2003 to 135.6 million tonnes. This increase may have been partly generated by the practise of flaring gas in Nigeria. This is the practice of extracting natural gas simultaneously with oil and burning it straight into the atmosphere, it is illegal in most countries. Exxon has emissions that are more than 50% higher than their closest competitor, despite only a slightly larger production of oil and gas. (ethicalcorp.com)

TOXIC EMISSIONS, DISCHARGES & SPILLS

ExxonMobil Refinery - The Exxon Valdex Oil Spill (1989) was the worst in U.S history, almost 11 million gallons were spilt and it has not been properly cleaned up or paid for; 15 yrs later the Prince William Sound in Alaska is still suffering from massive oil pollution. Many species have not recovered, and some are classed as still recovery. Ironically the company argues with the findings claiming that other factors, such as climate shifts could be causing the changes to species in Alaska. (knowmore.org)

EXCESSIVE POLITICAL INFLUENCE

- President George W. Bush (R) was the largest individual recipient of ExxonMobil campaign contributions in 2003. During the 2000 elections they gave $1 375 250 to political campaigns. Roughly 86% of ExxonMobil's campaign contributions go to Republican candidates.
- ExxonMobil is a leader in using its profits to buy political influence. In return, ExxonMobil has benefited from, among other things, over $5 billion in taxpayer subsidies over the last decade. These funds are funnelled through institutions like the US Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investments Corporations, and the World Bank. Over the last decade ExxonMobil has spent more than $40 million to pass legislation, subsides, corporate welfare, and tax breaks.
- ExxonMobil's investments have paid off well. Over the last decade, ExxonMobil has benefited from more than $5 billion of support from taxpayer backed institutions. Recent issues the company has lobbied on have been, rejecting Kyoto, drafting the National Energy Strategy that increased US reliance on oil, and outsing the head of the IPCC.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Human rights activists claim that ExxonMobil has been complicit in numerous human rights violations in Aceh, Indonesia and "has been financing the military operation in Aceh for a decade since 1989." TNI (Indonesian military) bases were parts of the ExxonMobil compound, it has been also claimed.

RESISTANCE

Over 300 Esso filling stations in the UK were targeted by 3000 protesters on December 1, 2001 who urged consumers to boycott Esso because of its stance on global warming. (And HEAPS more!)

Broken Hill Proprietary, started in 1895.
Moved to oil/gas mining in the 1960s, in Bass Straight.
Merged with Billiton Mining in 2001.

Board of Directors
Charles (Chip) Goodyear (CEO)
Don Argus (chairman)
Chairman of BHP Billiton Limited
and BHP Billiton Plc since June 2001.
Michael Chaney
David Jenkins
Lord Renwick of Clifton
John Schubert
David Brink
David Crawford
John Buchanan
Miklos (Mike) Salamon
Carlos Cordeiro
Karen Wood (Company Secretary)

In March 2005 BHP Billiton announced a US$7.3 billion agreed bid for another mining company WMC Resources, owners of the Olympic Dam uranium mine in South Australia, (wikipedia)

An Indenture Act signed in 1989 freed WMC from the 'burden' of State and Federal legislation and contained a confidentiality clause prohibiting the release of environmental and health reports unless agreed to by WMC and the government. This has serious consequences considering the hazardous nature of mining and milling uranium. (green.net.au)

"One infamous project was the Ok Tedi copper mine in Papua New Guinea, where the company was successfully sued by the indigenous inhabitants because of the environmental damage caused by the mine operations." (wikipedia)

"BHP's lawyers did draft controversial legislation for the Papua New Guinea government. The legislation will force inadequate compensation on river dwellers downstream from the polluting Ok Tedi mine, and will criminalise any further attempts by the PNG people to seek legal redress against the BHP-owned mine. " (greenleft.org.au)

"Shareholder Andy Whitmore, said large numbers of bushmen in Botswana were being removed from their homes in an area being prospected for diamonds by the Kalahari Diamond Company in which Billiton has a 20 per cent stake." (minesandcommunities.org)

Australia
BHP Billiton Limited
BHP Billiton Centre
180 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Phone: (61) 1300 55 47 57
Fax: (61 3) 9609 3015

http://www.minesandcommunities.org/Action/press202.htm
http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/1995/199/199p22.htm
http://www.green.net.au/humpsnotdumps/olympic.htm
http://www.bhpbilliton.com/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broken_Hill_Proprietary_Company
http://www.business-humanrights.org/Categories/Individualcompanies/B/BHPBilliton

ChevronTexaco

Dropped "Texaco" to become "Chevron" in May 2005.

Second biggest American Oil company, after Exxon. Headquartered in San Ramon, California. "ChevronTexaco has proved reserves of 11.9 billion barrels of oil equivalent and daily production in excess of 2.6 million barrels of oil equivalent." (sourcewatch).

Works in 180 countries. Has over 24 000 Petrol Stations operating under the Chevron, Texaco, and Caltex brandnames.

Aside from oil and petroleum business, the company also invest research and development of Solar PV cell technology, hydrogen fuel cells, and nanotechnology. They have exploration and production, refining, and marketing operations in Australia.

board of directors at august 2005:

- David J. O'Reilly (Chairman)
- Samual H. Armacost
- Robert E. Denham
- Robert J. Eaton
- Sam Ginn
- Carla Anderson Hills
- Franklyn G. Jenifer
- Sam Nunn
- Peter J. Robertson
- Charles R. Shoemate
- Ronald D. Sugar
- Carl Ware

dodgy stuff... (from wikipedia)

- In 1992, 777 women filed a class-action suit against Chevron for discrimination and tolerating sexual harassment at Chevron Information Technology Company in San Ramon. In 1995, they settled the harassment claim for $2.2 million. Chevron settled the rest of the charges for $7.42 million.
- "Mother's Day Massacre" : In 1993, the day before Mother's Day, Ortho, a joint division of Chevron and Monsanto, fired more than 60 sales people, 90% of them over 40 years old. 43 of the employees sued Chevron and Monsanto for age discrimination. They settled for $18.3 million.
- In 1998, activists were staging a demonstration on an oil platform in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. Chevron brought the military in by helicopter. Soldiers shot the activists and subsequently two activists died from their wounds. The Nigerian government is reportedly 80% dependent upon oil production and is condemned by many for its reported treatment of environmentalists.
- Chevron had ten refinery accidents in ten years at their refinery in Richmond, Ca. The 10th accident occurred on 25 March 1999, when the refinery exploded. Hundreds of people living nearby complained of difficulty breathing and vomiting afterwards. Chevron's warning system was delayed for up to a half-hour after the blast.
- Communities for a Better Environment sued Chevron, Unocal (also an initiative funder), and other oil companies for polluting Latino and African-American communities in Los Angeles.
- Chevron has given campaign donations to California governor Pete Wilson, California attorney general Dan Lungren, California legislator Pete Knight, and San Francisco supervisor Amos Brown.
- Also helped in lobbying for G. W. Bush's presidency in 2002. Raised $200,000 through Wayne L. Berman, a principal lobbyist for Chevron.

Contact Information

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Caltex Australia Limited
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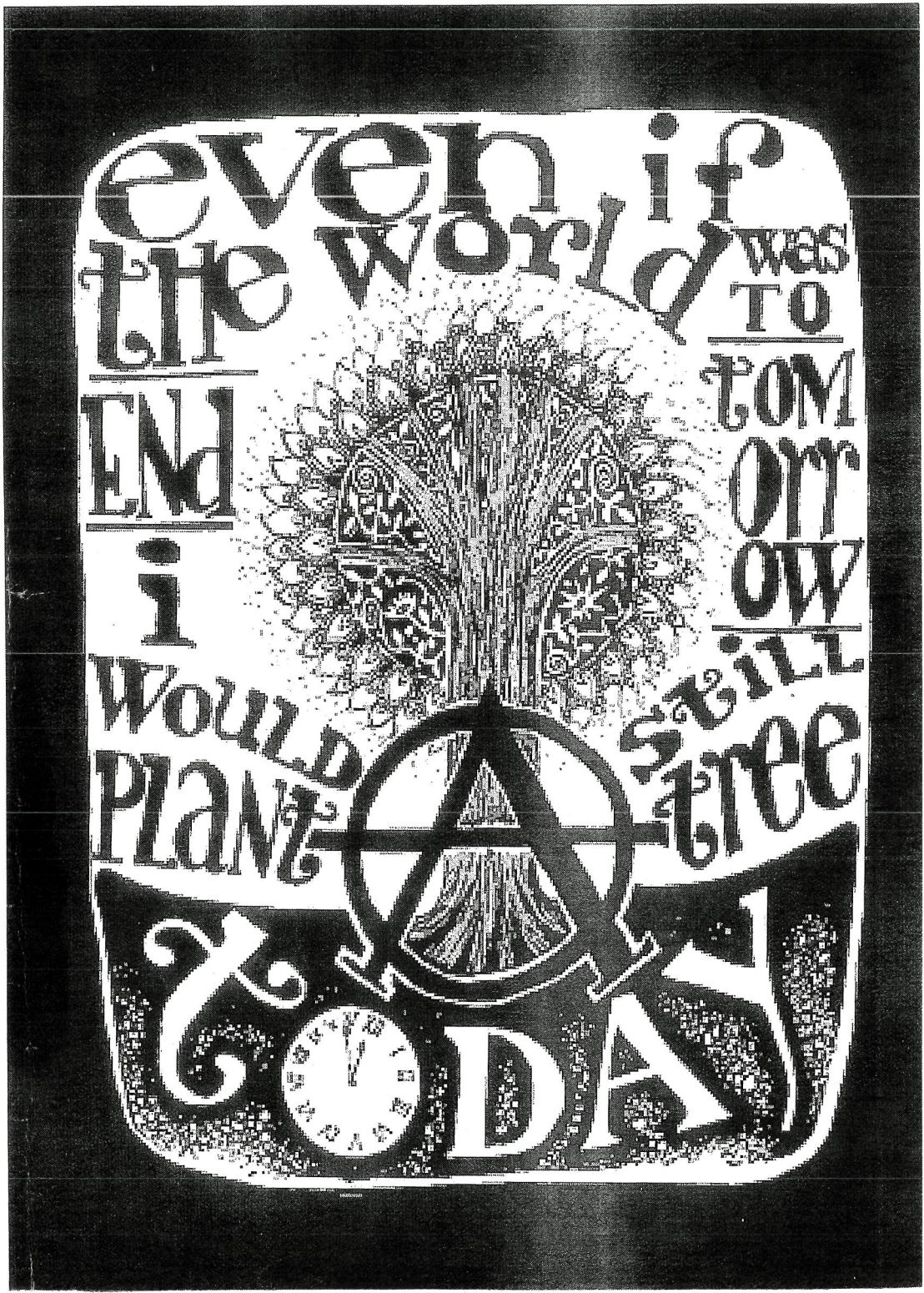
19-29 Martin Place
Sydney, New South Wales, 2000
Telephone: 61.2.9250.5000
Fax: 61.2.9250.5742

http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=ChevronTexaco
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/11/AR2005071101671.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chevron_Corporation
http://www.chevron.com/operations/asia_pacific/australia.asp


even if
the world was
END
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i
would
still
plant
tree
today

Gunns Limited: Australia's Biggest Destroyer of Native Forests

Gunns is the biggest native-forest logging company in Australia and the biggest hardwood-chip company in the world.

Gunns receives the overwhelming majority of logs destined for sawmills and woodchip mills from Tasmania. It owns all four export-woodchip mills in Tasmania. It exports more woodchips from Tasmania than are exported from all mainland states combined. Gunns exports over four million tonnes of native-forest woodchips each year. The vast majority of the logging operations on public land in Tasmania consist of clearfelling and burning. Gunns owns over two thirds of the eucalypt sawmilling industry in Tasmania, and two major eucalypt veneer mills.

Gunns is the driving force for the destruction of old growth forests in places such as the Tarkine, the Styx, the South-West wilderness and the North-East Highlands. Gunns has also cleared many thousands of hectares of native forest, including rainforest, on its private land. After these forests are chipped, the land is converted to plantations. Gunns uses 1080 poison to kill wallabies and possums that browse on the seedlings established in place of the cleared forests. The poisoned carrots also kill other wildlife ('non-target' species) such as bettongs, quolls and owls.

Woodchipping: Gunns derives most of its profits from export woodchipping. Export woodchipping accounts for over 90% of the oldgrowth logs extracted from logged forests on public land. Gunns owns two woodchip mills at Bell Bay (north of Launceston), one at Hampshire (south of Burnie), and one at Triabunna (East Coast). The Hampshire mill generates the woodchips that are piled on the wharf at Burnie. Many of these are rainforest woodchips (predominantly myrtle). The woodchips are sold to paper-making companies in north Asia – mostly in Japan. Gunns' customers include Mitsubishi, Nippon and Oji.

In 2000, woodchipping in Tasmania reached record levels, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. However, since 2001, (when Gunns became a virtual woodchip monopoly in Tasmania), Gunns has vetoed the publication of data on woodchipping (for 'business-confidentiality' reasons).

Sawmilling and veneer: According to Forestry Tasmania and Gunns, it is Gunns' demand for sawlogs and veneer-logs that drives new roads and logging into previously untouched valleys. This is destroying wilderness and oldgrowth forests in famous areas such as the South-West wilderness (Weld, Picton, Huon, Florentine, Upper Derwent); the Styx Valley of the Giants; the Great Western Tiers; the Tarkine; the North-East Highlands; and proposed extensions to the Ben Lomond National Park. These logs are transported to sawmills at Western Junction (near Launceston), Austins Ferry (north of Hobart) and Smithton. Approximately 70% of all logs transported to sawmills are eventually woodchipped – as 'sawmill residues'.

Gunns has two veneer mills – one at Somerset (near Burnie) and the other next door to the Boyer newsprint mill (near Hobart). Demand for solid, pale logs for veneer is destroying some of the last stands of oldgrowth Eucalyptus regnans – the tallest flowering plant on Earth. In 1996, less than 13% of original regnans was left as oldgrowth. That figure is probably now about 10%. Clearfelling operations are wiping out stands of E. regnans and replacing them with regeneration and plantations. Such operations are eroding the magnificent stands in the Styx and Florentine valleys – the world's last strongholds of oldgrowth E. regnans.

Logging steep slopes : Demand for big, straight trees for sawlogs and veneer is also driving logging operations on to steep slopes, especially in the Styx Valley and North-East Highlands. This is carried out using 'cable logging' – a means of clearing slopes that would otherwise be too steep to log.

Illegal logging : In August 2002, Gunns was found to have illegally logged an area of private forest near Middleton, south of Hobart. The Kingborough Council is investigating taking legal action against Gunns; the Huon council gave retrospective approval for the logging (which straddled the boundary of the Huon and Kingborough municipalities). Gunns was also convicted and fined a record $50,000 for breaching the Forest Practices Code and causing major damage to a stream in a road-widening operation on the Tasman Peninsula in December 2001.

Gunns' private land : Gunns is Tasmania's biggest private land-owner, with over 130,000 hectares. Most of this is located in the Surrey Hills block in north-west Tasmania (south of Burnie). This 90,000-hectare tract has been largely cleared and converted to eucalypt plantations. Clearing operations are continuing, in both eucalypt forests and rainforest. The trees are fed into the Hampshire woodchip mill where they are chipped and then piled on the wharf at Burnie awaiting export. Gunns is planning to destroy forests on private land on the historic Recherche Peninsula south of Hobart. This involves driving a new logging road across the Southport Lagoon Conservation Area.

Other private land : Gunns is also a destroyer of native forests on other private land, by means of joint ventures or other commercial arrangements with owners of native forests. The resulting destruction of scenery, use of 1080 poison (with impacts both on native wildlife and domestic pets), use of herbicides, and adverse impacts on water supplies have enraged local landowners and residents all over Tasmania.

Shareholders and Creditors: Major shareholders in Gunns include: The Commonwealth Bank of Australia (8.6%); Perpetual (11.19%); Permanent Trustee (8%); AMP (7.21%); Concord Capital (7.54%). The ANZ Bank is Gunns' biggest creditor. The ANZ lent Gunns over $250 million so that Gunns could purchase three of its four woodchip mills (from North Forest products) in 2001. (The ANZ Bank also profits out of the continuing war on Iraq).

Update on Gunns Litigation

The campaign to protect the remainder of Tasmania's old growth forests was given a boost today as Justice Bongiorno struck out the Statement of Claim brought by woodchipping giant Gunns Ltd against 20 groups and individuals arising out of the campaign to protect Tasmania's forests. While the case will continue with Gunns being ordered to file a 'radically rewritten' claim, The Wilderness Society hailed the judgement as a partial victory.

Spokesperson Virginia Young for The Wilderness Society, which is the 6th Defendant in the case, said "This judgement will give forest defenders everywhere a real boost. The judge found that the Statement of Claim against us was 'embarrassing' and that it would be 'unfair to the defendants to require them to plead to this Statement of Claim'.
"The judge described the structure of the writ as 'unintelligible' and in many parts, as 'at best ambiguous and at worst misleading... The judge went on to comment that 'vague allegations on very significant matters may conceal claims which are merely speculative."

It is important to remember that what is at stake is the future of Tasmania's world class forests. While we have been successful in encouraging the Prime Minister and Tasmanian Premier to protect some of the key forests, like this legal case, much more remains to be done. Gunns have been given until 18 August to lodge their new Amended Statement in the multi-million dollar legal case against The Wilderness Society and 19 others (Gunns v Marr & Ors) in the Victorian Supreme Court.

www.wilderness.org.au

reflections on civil disobedience

sergio fielder

Civil Disobedience Today Research Initiative on International Activism NSW Parliament House 8 November 2002

"Those who profess to favour freedom, yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightening. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

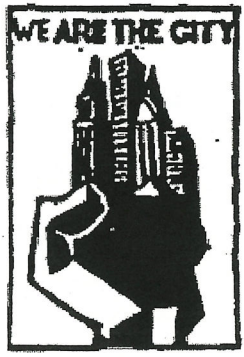
Frederick Douglass, African-American abolitionist

We could approach the question of civil disobedience from a number of perspectives. Within the liberal-democratic tradition, civil disobedience can be considered as a fundamental part of the right to rebel against unfair laws and tyrannical government. By giving a radical twist to this argument, it is possible to argue that civil disobedience, as dimension of the right to rebel constitutes a fundamental human right. Even more, I would like to argue that the right to rebel is not simply another human right, but the most important human right we have. In fact, without acknowledging the existence of a right to rebel, the very idea of human rights ceases to make any sense. We need to remember that the dominant discourse of human rights emerged out of the mass rebellions of the American and French Revolutions. Within modern society, it was the exercise of the right to rebel the one that opened the possibility for us to contemplate today the very notion of human rights. The right to rebel underwrites and creates the foundation for every human right to exist, its full exercise therefore becoming the only effective avenue of political defence when those rights are under attack by conservative forces.

In the age of the "war on terror" and neo-liberalism, when transnational military and economic organisations are making decision affecting the vast majority of people in the planet without creating avenues of consultation (and in fact suppressing democracy and civil liberties), the right to rebel and civil disobedience ought to be nurtured as one of our most important political choices.

It is necessary, on the other hand, to recognise the inadequacies of this liberal-democratic perspective on civil disobedience. By focusing on individual rights, liberal-democratic approaches often tend to obscure the fact that "unfair" and "unjust" laws function to benefit a dominant corporate elite or political class within society. They also fail to recognise that a complex network of institutions and ideologies politically supports an "unfair" law. To make sense of civil disobedience not simply as an expression of liberal moral outrage, "unfair" laws need therefore to be understood in terms of the social antagonisms and power relations providing the foundation of their legal existence. They also need to be understood in terms of the institutions and ideologies attempting to create the impression that we live in a peaceful and democratic society without contradictions and inequalities.

Here the logic of civil disobedience is not simply about breaking the law, but breaking the law in order to make the antagonisms that exist obscured and hidden within our society visible. When demonstrators blockaded the offices of Australian Correctional Management (ACM) last year and denied people entry to it, they were not about promoting violence but signifying in both a



physical and symbolic way the violence of incarceration suffered by thousands of refugees in Australia; it was about bringing for a brief moment the reality of the detention camps to the "respectable" space of Sydney's CBD. Moreover, acts of civil disobedience like this become real schools of political science. By making social antagonism visible, people not only learn about their ability and power to work together and enact change collectively, but also about the role of the media, the police and government in managing or suppressing dissent.

Making the antagonism between an oppressive social order and the multitude visible might not end up in a revolution, but it can have important social and political repercussions. As Verity Burgmann argues, even the success of moderate demands and actions depend on groups of activists making "unreasonable" proposals. Civil disobedience is, therefore, about being realistic by demanding the impossible. What is truly real always lies within the impossible. Civil disobedience is to make a point by standing on the performative power of the outrageous, where the most unreasonable position becomes the only guarantee for the survival of the ethical act. In other words, civil disobedience is an act of political intervention that seeks to change the field of meaning of what is considered possible. "When the stick is bent in the wrong way –as it is the case today- it is necessary, in order to put the world back on track, to hold it and bend it in the opposite direction until the stick is right".

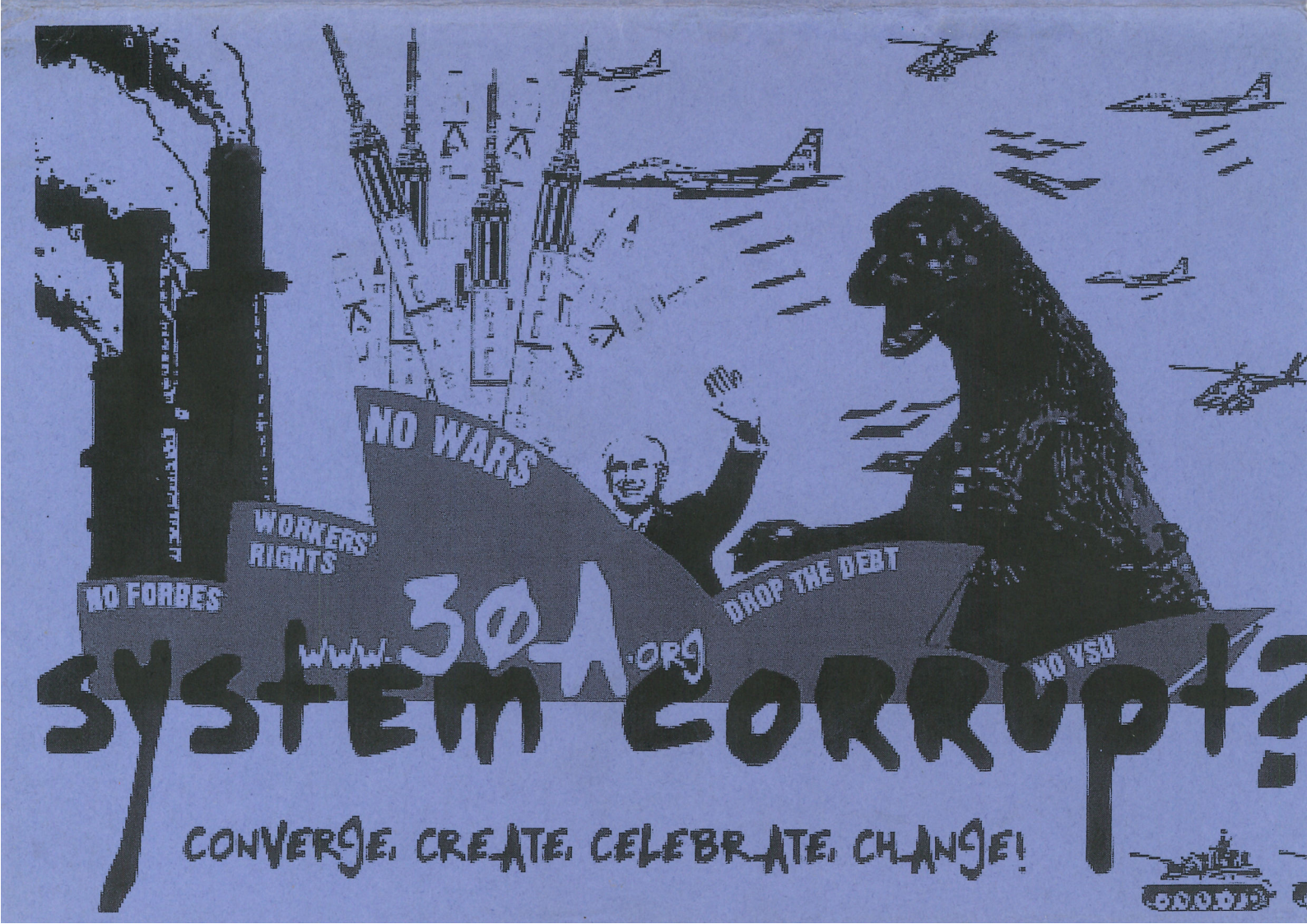
The new anti-corporate activist should perhaps draw inspiration from the figure of the refugee and the undocumented migrant. The refugee engages in a double act of civil disobedience. The first act of civil disobedience is refusing to submit to a situation of poverty and oppression by escaping the power of her own nation-state. In the age of terror and globalisation, mass migration in this respect has become a fundamental tool of resistance. But for this act of rebellion to be politically meaningful it needs to be completed by a second act of civil disobedience: demanding a more inclusive global system by challenging the borders and the privileges of the nation-states of the first world such as United States and Australia. Undocumented migrants, therefore, are not simply the passive victims of a system of exclusion; they are a truly democratic force constituting a new social landscape. Their suffering and their resistance form a clear example of civil disobedience. They represent a new type of globalisation: a globalisation from below by an undocumented multitude that, in its escape from the political and economic enclosures created by capitalism, challenges the ideology of the nation-state by moving across national borders independently of state intervention and approval.

What a profound act of dignity and civility were the fences of Woomera falling down in the middle of desert last March. This action was extraordinary because it was the encounter of two vastly distinct and multiple cultural worlds creating a third space for inter-cultural communication, that was far more legitimate and effective than the bland discourse of official multiculturalism.

Woomera 2002 highlights what is, at least for me, the most important dimensions of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience opens the possibility for the "enacted utopia" of the anti-statist and anti-capitalist public sphere. Following Slavoj Zizek, it is possible to argue that civil disobedience is the radical political act where a world inclusive of many worlds is not simply a distant promise, but the suspension of the oppressive temporality of the existing social order through which the possibility of that new world manifests itself in the actual moment of civil disobedience.

Civil disobedience is "the short circuit between the present and the future" where we are for a moment of our lives "allowed to act as if the utopian future were already at hand, just there to be grab". In contrast to our daily routines within a consumer society such as waged labour, civil disobedience is not another form hardship or sacrifice we need to undergo in order to achieve a "good" and "moral" society at the end of the road. Certainly, as it is often the case, civil disobedience exposes demonstrators to the violence of the State. In this respect, civil disobedience carries within it a profound sense of collective self-sacrifice and hardship, where what is dearest to us -our bodies- become an avenue of resistance. However, unlike the self-sacrifice of the worker in the assembly line or the suicide-bomber for that matter, the hardship of civil disobedience is a sacrifice over which a living future of freedom and happiness already cast its shadow. For us, therefore, civil disobedience is the opportunity to open a space to communicate with each other, to develop and forge political and social relations that are based on solidarity, collective reciprocity and absolute democracy, and not competition and greed. Civil disobedience is not about violence, but the gentleness and tenderness of a multitude. In a society where we have to commute between work and home in packed trains and buses without talking to each other, a collective act like this is a true moment of grace.

From there the subversive joyfulness and carnivalesque atmosphere often inherent within civil disobedience, not matter the different tactical questions, the police repression or the practical difficulties that often protesters need to confront. The disobedient is not a rented crowd herded into the streets by a leadership. The disobedient is not a grey mob fuelled by social resentment but a multitude inspired and empowered by the possibility of emancipation. That is the reason, and to paraphrase Zizek, why the disobedient is, even if only for a brief moment, already free while fighting for freedom; she is already happy while fighting for happiness. When that sense of freedom and happiness are acted out against the background of a nation-state that incarcerates immigrants and refugees, and raids Muslim families in the middle of the night, civil disobedience becomes the political proof that dignity and hope still exist, and that in fact, we are still alive.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